



School Committee Meeting Materials

Regular School Committee Meeting

March 8, 2018

7:30pm

*Ms. Mary A. Manning
Mr. James M. Fleming
Ms. Kristine Wilson*



*Ms. Ana Nuncio
Mr. Manny Cruz
Ms. Amanda Campbell*

Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Chair

“Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033.”

March 6, 2018

REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Salem School Committee will hold a Regular School Committee meeting on Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

AGENDA

I. Call of Meeting to Order

II. Approval of the Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting Held February 12, 2018 – Tabled from 2/26/18
- b. Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting Held February 26, 2018

IV. Questions and Comments from the Audience

V. Superintendent’s Report – Margarita Ruiz

VI. Presentation and Reports

Update and Information on Action Item Regarding the Nathaniel Bowditch and Horace Mann Laboratory Schools

VII. Action Items

- a. Deliberation and Vote on the Superintendent’s Recommendation to Close the Nathaniel Bowditch School and Transfer all Students to Other Schools in the District and to Relocate the Horace Mann Laboratory School to the Building Located at 79 Willson Street in Salem – Tabled from February 26, 2018

VIII. Finance Report

- a. Approval of Warrants

March 8, 2018 in the amount of \$490, 678.81

b. Budget Transfers

IX. **Subcommittee Reports**

X. **School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

XI. **Questions and Comments from the Audience**

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary to the
Salem School Committee

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 12, 2017

A Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, February 12, 2017, following the Public Hearing on the Recommendation to Dissolve the Nathaniel Bowditch School and Relocate the Horace Mann Laboratory School at 9:26 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

Members Present: Ms. Mary Manning, Ms. Kristine Wilson, Ms. Ana Nuncio, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Amanda Campbell, and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

Members Absent: Mr. James Fleming

Others Present: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications, and members of the Salem Community

Call to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting to order at 9:26 p.m.

Discussion on Moving the Head Start Next Year to the YMCA

For clarification, Ms. Wilson said that Superintendent Ruiz mentioned today the moving of the Pre-School over to the Collins Middle School and had referred to it last week as the Head Start and asked Ms. Ruiz if she meant the Pre-School or just the Head Start. Ms. Ruiz responded that she meant the Head Start and then looking into adding and expanding possible pre-school opportunities. Ms. Wilson asked if it would be for next year. Mayor Driscoll and Superintendent Ruiz responded that they would have class space available. Ms. Ruiz said it would not be the ECC. Ms. Driscoll said it would be the YMCA.

Discussion on Alternative Options

Mayor Driscoll commented that she is concerned for the students at the Nathaniel Bowditch School. They have been through this for a number of years and she has been around this table, tables at the Bowditch School with parents, with different successions of the leadership they had there, and unfortunately have not had the types of success they want with respect to the achievement MCAS issues. Ms. Driscoll asked Superintendent Ruiz if there is a potential Plan B should the Nathaniel Bowditch School continue. Superintendent Ruiz responded that she had not mentioned before that part of the original recommendations for the joint, in the district, intervention plan was to move the middle school to the Collins and strongly feels that should be an option on the table. That would leave the Bowditch K-5 as a stand-alone elementary school. They could consider deepening the work with keeping it as an elementary school. Ms. Ruiz continued that she is very concerned about the idea of merging the Horace Mann with the Bowditch school from several fronts. The Horace Mann School, based on the assignment policy presented, is currently balanced in terms of its enrollment as is also shown in the data presented earlier during the School Committee meeting. Ms. Ruiz stated that she would not recommend merging the Horace Mann with the Bowditch School.

Other Option

Ms. Ruiz explained that the option would be to move the middle school to the Collins and keep the Bowditch School as K-5, but would be very challenging and problematic. Another process that was thought about, after moving the middle school to the Collins, was a merge of the Bowditch K-5 with the Carlton School. Mayor Driscoll added that it would be because there is high demand for Carlton. Superintendent Ruiz agreed and continued that it is a high performing school. One concern they have with the Carlton model is the much smaller scale transitions. Superintendent Ruiz said she is concerned about having the 180 plus students they would have at Bowditch all beginning at the same time, within that model. Other concerns would be the staffing they would need to add throughout the school. Due to the innovation school model, a merger with Carlton may require more staff than currently budgeted. Such a move would likely require amendments to the school's innovation plan, which would take time to develop. These are concerning if they were to do this by September. Ms. Wilson asked if Carlton has expressed an interest in becoming a K-8 school. Superintendent Ruiz responded that some members of the Carlton community have expressed this, but it is not clear how much consensus there is on this issue. Ms. Ruiz said that they would have to balance the school and look at the kinds of challenges and stressors they would be adding to a higher performing school.

Current Plan

Superintendent Ruiz stated that with the plan they currently have on the table they would be sending the students to higher performing schools in a thoughtful way that they would add the support as opposed to having one school having to absorb between 180 – 200 students (rounded) all at once. Members agreed that it could be overwhelming for any one school, especially one with a relatively new Principal such as the Carlton has right now, to take this on.

Two-Way/Dual-Language Program

Mayor Driscoll stated that there is healthy romanticism around the Two-Way program. The Federal Street School was a sought-after school when it started. It went into a new building. This dual-language program was highly regarded and worked very well for years. Ms. Driscoll continued that it was her impression that they had a really tough time recruiting staff, somewhere along the lines, along with some of the leadership challenges. It became hard to continue as a two-way school and to pave the way. Mayor Driscoll asked Superintendent Ruiz why the two-way school is not a consideration. Superintendent Ruiz confirmed that the Bowditch School has not been a two-way dual language school for years and is not one now. It is important to build a successful dual-language program, one grade level at a time, and is done when a school is stable, when there is a certain level of academic performance in the school, with qualified instructors on the English side of things, and adequate staffing as dual-language has its own set of challenges. It is difficult to find fully certified and licensed bilingual teachers, with written and oral language proficiency to teach it effectively. Being bilingual by itself is not sufficient. Teachers must also be fully licensed in grade and content area. Ms. Ruiz continued that staffing, for a dual-language program, is very complex. Building a dual-language program now at the Bowditch School would not be successful given its current conditions and is a long-term proposition.

Excellence Language Learning Initiative

The district is looking into ways to expand and improve language learning throughout the district. Rebecca Westlake, Director of the ELL Department, has put together an initiative called Excellence Language Learning for everyone in Salem. There is a group that is looking and researching, within that initiative, the programs in the Look bill. They need to search different models more deeply to see where they have fertile ground in the district. They need to have truly invested leadership that can rally the teachers, something that was done at the Federal Street School. Superintendent Ruiz continued that it has been her understanding the Federal

Street School was already a successful dual-language school by the time it was moved to Willson Street. They have a group that is researching those programs to make recommendations for the future.

Spanish Language Program

Ms. Ruiz reported that they are also doing a review of the Spanish, as a Second Language, instruction in the district. They have several schools that are teaching Spanish as a 2nd language. The review involves finding out if they have the right curriculum and best materials, for example, and have that group come up with recommendations. Ms. Ruiz said that her vision is to have all the Salem students in the district have Spanish as a 2nd language, in addition to considering a possible dual-language program.

Seal of Biliteracy Program

They have a group looking into the Seal of Biliteracy certificate this year, which is a credential that students would have on their High School Diploma that certifies that they are fully bilingual in two, or even three, languages. There is a process to establish and assessments that students can take to do that. These all fall within the language learning initiative they have not abandoned as a district. Superintendent Ruiz stated there is a deep sense, within the community, that they are losing that commitment if they close the Bowditch school when they are actually recommitting themselves to that striving to do it successfully as was done back in the late 1980s – when the Federal Street School was established. Ms. Ruiz continued that they would need to have a strong, deeply invested, and willful leader that could also generate excitement among the staff, for any development, such as the Dual-Language program and Innovation School, to move forward. Those things are hard to do when they have leadership and staff turnover.

Two-Way/Dual-Language Program (continued)

Members continued discussion on the Two-Way Dual-Language Program. Mayor Driscoll asked Superintendent Ruiz where the Nathaniel Bowditch School currently stands with the two-way dual language program, where they have wide achievement gaps. Ms. Wilson added that the Bowditch School also has most non-tenured teachers. Members shared further discussion, insight, and feedback on the difficulty of hiring staff for the program. Ms. Manning said that the challenge was more than just hiring difficulties. Finding staff had always been difficult to find for the program but positions were also cut during the budget process. It decreased from one Spanish and English teacher for the different subjects, in each grade level, to someone doing two of the Spanish and enough English where they could do one English and 6th and a 7th grade. It was cut and chipped away. The 1st issue was the budget. The 2nd issue was the difficulty in finding the right people.

Discussion on World Language

Ms. Manning added that it sounds as if there is a roll out of Spanish for the English speakers at the Collins School when she hears others and the Superintendent speak in reference to World Language. Ms. Manning continued that they have a very watered down program compared to what they had before. They had students go through both East and West for years. When they merged as Collins, the 6th graders did exploratory both of two quarters: one in French and one in Spanish and then picked whether they were going to take French or Spanish. Then 7th and 8th graders took French and Spanish full-time, full hour period a day that counted as an academic class with a grade. Ms. Manning continued that she believes that the Spanish classes students are taking are rolled into the Specialist schedule. Members agreed that all elementary schools have Spanish. Ms. Manning pointed out that it is nothing like a true program of a 2nd language. Superintendent Ruiz responded they have staff looking into that to seek what they need to do to

make it better. Ms. Ruiz wanted to counter the narrative that Bowditch is the only school where students could possibly learn Spanish as a second language. Mayor Driscoll stated that is ideally one opportunity for them to recognize that they have Latino students throughout Salem schools and parents who would love their child to be exposed to, and hopefully become proficient in a second language. Hopefully, the only way to do that is not through a two-way program. They would need to look into what other linguistic options they might have within the district and consider a realistic timeline to do something like that. They do not want to overpromise and underperform for parents who might be interested in something like that.

Mayor Driscoll continued that it would be good, in terms of additional information, to calculate out. What are those Spanish language options, in other places as they get teased out, going to look like as they potentially look to close the school: what is the timeline and realistic commitment for that? Superintendent Ruiz responded that the answer would come out of the work of these teams and that it is precisely what these teams have been charged with doing, which is looking into:

- What do they have in place?
- What are the recommendations from these committees in increasing access in the district?
- What are opportunities in terms of dual language and other type of programming that the new bill has made available?

Mayor Driscoll asked about the timing of the work that is going on with the committees. Ms. Ruiz responded this is something that has very recently gone underway and can have Rebecca Westlake put in a timeline.

Discussion on Proposal

Mayor Driscoll asked if there was anything from the joint labor management proposal, beyond moving the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, they have not yet moved forward on? Mayor Driscoll remembered the conscious decision not to implement the 6th, 7th, and 8th move, because it was a March conversation and the fear was that if one is a 5th grade parent, for example, they would maybe decide to pursue other options for not having enough time. The recommendation was felt too fast, the new leader wanted to make it happen, and it was not implemented. Mayor Driscoll asked if there was anything else in the list of recommendations. Ms. Carbone responded that something underway now, with the teams that Superintendent Ruiz had just mentioned, is one recommendation to appoint a team to research effective language programs. Mayor Driscoll clarified it is one thing underway and nothing else. Members agreed. Superintendent Ruiz said there are copies of the recommendations in the data packet.

Applications - General Pool Positions

Ms. Manning wondered if teachers are currently applying on Talent Ed for positions in Salem before a vote is made. Ms. Conrad responded that teachers are able to apply, at any time, for vacancies in the district. Ms. Manning wondered which positions they would be applying for if there aren't any listed. Ms. Ruiz wondered if pools are posted. Ms. Conrad responded there are general teacher pools that are posted to begin attracting them to Salem and is done every year. Positions are not specific job postings nor are they for specific schools at this time. Ms. Wilson asked if retirement was announced to which they might be applying for. Ms. Manning asked for clarification on the meaning of pool posting. Ms. Conrad explained the need to recruit a certain number of special education and other types of teachers every year due to vacancies, so they have a general "pool" posting for special education teachers. Ms. Manning clarified that applicants would submit their applications for special education in general and not any particular special education position. Superintendent Ruiz and Ms. Conrad agreed. Ms. Conrad

said it is helpful to have the pools posted to direct people to apply to Salem Public Schools when they go out to recruitment fairs. These are candidates who apply early, stating their interest to work in Salem.

Assignment Process for Families

Superintendent Ruiz stated that it goes back to the issue of balancing, planning and providing information without giving out information. They have laid out the process to families in the assignment process to receive family's preferences. No assignments will be made until the decision comes from the Committee. They are not assigning students at this time. Mayor Driscoll asked if they are collecting the data. Ms. Ruiz responded they are collecting family preferences. They explain the transfer process, assignment policy, and ask families to select their top 3 choices as the assignment policy calls for. They have the families fill out the form. No confirmations or promises are made to families; they are only seeking their preferences in order for the district to be ready if and when the time comes.

Teachers

Similarly, a process to identify the preferences and interests of current staff members is underway. Liza Bento, Director of Human Capital, spent most of last week personally meeting individually with teachers to let them know of the opportunities that are available should they consider other options and for them to let her know what they are interested in. No confirmations or promises are made to teachers; they are just seeking their preferences. Ms. Wilson asked if this applies to everyone or just tenured. Superintendent Ruiz responded it is for everyone and stated that she, Beth Kontos, and the team held three different meetings at the Nathaniel Bowditch School to provide teachers with general information about the process. They met with tenured teachers and explained what the process might look like and of the available positions, should the School Committee approve the recommendations.

Non-Professional Staff

They met with the non-professional staff the following day and explained to them that they would post all available specific (not the general pool) positions they have in the different schools after professional teachers have been placed. They would then have an opportunity to apply and go through the interview process with the principals in the district before those positions are opened up to external candidates. They are given that priority. Ms. Ruiz continued they did this in a period of two weeks. They explained these possibilities to teachers and staff, because they also wanted to address possible anxieties that come with not knowing. They were not provided with specific dates or assignments.

Centrally Deployed Staff

Superintendent Ruiz continued they also met with the centrally deployed staff such as adjustment counselors and some of the special education teachers that are centrally assigned to follow the students. They explained to them that they would be looking to where students would be assigned to, that students are not leaving the district, and they need to see where the students are in order to employ them accordingly.

Discussion on Information Provided

The goal of those conversations is to provide everyone with the possible scenarios to prevent confusion and doubt. Superintendent Ruiz continued that they were very careful with providing the necessary information and documentation shared pending School Committee approval. They tried to balance the information provided, in terms of what to expect, to give the sense that it is not concrete, it is a recommendation, but they want to be ready.

Discussion on Alternative Options Continued

Mr. Cruz clarified on the Mayor's point earlier on having an alternative option, that if the recommendation is not approved, they would be potentially looking at the 2015 plan that recommends turning it into a K-5 School and then moving the 6th and 7th graders over to the Collins Middle School. Superintendent Ruiz agreed. Mayor Driscoll stated they would have to vote on that. Members agreed. Members began discussion on the setback of timing. Mayor Driscoll stated that School Committee members, at that time, were not willing to support it, because families did not support it. It was very late in the year and Mayor Driscoll and School Committee members felt it somewhat blindsided families, because the discussion was very late in the school year. Mr. Cruz informed that members of the community have concern and feel there doesn't seem to be an alternative and feels it is important to articulate this information to the families. Superintendent Ruiz responded that the reason she has not presented this alternative is because she does not think that keeping Bowditch as a K-5 is going to fundamentally address the issues they have in the school. They would have the same issues as a K-5 that they have now as a K-8. Ms. Ruiz continued they could put it as an alternative but cautions the Committee about that option, because she does not think it gets to the heart of the challenge for students and feels that students would be better served by the recommendation on the table.

Concerns

Ms. Campbell commented that she continuously hears the sense of urgency and understands that students do not have time to wait. Falling behind is cumulative meaning that the more they fall behind causes further delays in moving forward. Ms. Campbell continued that she has significant concerns because she also knows, and experienced, the firsthand effects of a plan that was not thought out or followed through with. Students, more than not having time to waste, do not have time to lose on the long-term effects of a plan that is not followed through with. The plan right now, as it stands, does not do anything for the achievement gap and does not truly desegregate the schools; it just puts them somewhere else. There is no guarantee what the following years would look like. Ms. Campbell needs to know and see there is a follow-up plan and that supports are put in place. They have this plan in front of them now and have had it for a week. It is hard to feel comfortable making an immediate decision knowing that these students had already been promised for years that the issues were being worked on and these students deserve the best. Ms. Campbell stated she needs to know what specific supports are in place, at the receiving schools, for the students. What sorts of professional developments are going to be in place (the front loading of the PD at the start of the year is definitely something she is interested in), would they be increasing special educational supports, is there thought to paraprofessionals and speech teachers from the Bowditch, would there be follow-ups, are they doing another dump and run, etc. Members continued further discussion. Ms. Campbell expressed her concern that she is not sure the community has a reason to trust the School Committee right now and she does not know what the plan is and so cannot trust she knows what is going to happen. Mayor Driscoll said that is a fair point and suggested coming up with some hypotheticals that can demonstrate what a resource team might look like at a receiving school and perhaps a type of standard where if they had a certain number of ELL students going – there is a ratio of this to that, for example. Members continued discussion on information to view their definition of what their fully staffed and supportive school looks like and allocation of resources for a receiving school in Salem. Members shared feedback, insight, and further discussion.

School Name

Ms. Manning asked when would the school name issue arise if the recommendation were to be approved. Mayor Driscoll responded that it would have to be addressed the same evening of the

vote. Ms. Nuncio commented that the big change would be to consider things from the standpoint of those parents who feel dispossessed. These are parents who feel they do not have as much political clout or political capital as everyone else and Bowditch means something for all of them as a seat of language learning. Ms. Nuncio explained that research supports that students do much better in their studies and acquisition of English when they have a base in their own first language. That research has been there for 60 years. Members agreed. Ms. Nuncio continued that it is her sense that if Rebecca could provide that information to them, and more than a task force, it is sort of the beginning building blocks of what they would have at Bowditch and a few other schools. To show what this would look like would be a way forward. Ms. Manning asked Ms. Nuncio if she is saying that she would like to keep the name as Bowditch. Ms. Nuncio responded that she would, because it is remarkably emblematic about language learning. They have to listen deeply to what people are saying. Their Social Justice curriculum is in their listening to the parents. Mr. Cruz added that it is about dignity and dignity of those parents. The dignities of those communities are put at stake when using erasure and trying to create equity. He can empathize with those parents because he has attachment to the Horace Mann for having attended. They would need to deliberate an alternative name, if something were to be moved forward; they would need to have a conversation about keeping the name. Some of the comments that have been made suggest that one name would stay if a plan passes. It is the same problem they have with the alternative option, it does not appear that it exists. Mr. Cruz continued discussion on the name and stated he could not think of a better person to commemorate, and speak to this commitment of dual-language, than Arlene Dannenberg who he considered to be a former phenomenal educator and thought leader in the Salem community. Mr. Cruz stated he is certainly in accord with Ms. Manning and Ms. Nuncio that they need to have very thoughtful and deliberative process with reference to the School name. Members shared feedback and continued further discussion on the topic.

Ms. Campbell said she appreciates the comments on the school name but that it feels a bit premature to discuss naming the new building at this time when they have yet to vote. Ms. Manning responded that it is only due to the Mayor's previous response to her question that they would have to address the name the same evening of the vote. Mayor Driscoll said that the proposal, as she knows it, is that the Superintendent would be closing the Bowditch School and relocating students to other schools in the district, hopefully with appropriate services and resources and relocating the Horace Mann School into that building. Some students might stay but the vast majority of students are from the Horace Mann. There is a strong community there, they have a laboratory school, and are connected to Salem State. An entire collection of people would feel strongly against being told that they are going to add some of the Bowditch students and so their name would have to change. That is a whole other discussion to have for the collection of people who feel very strongly about their school. Mayor Driscoll continued that the Horace Mann Laboratory School has history, has a strong and engaged community. Ms. Driscoll stated that it is her understanding that the proposal is to relocate the Horace Mann, not close it. Superintendent Ruiz agreed. Ms. Manning commented that she wants time to discuss it. Members agreed and continued further discussion. Members also discussed the strong need for an Early Ed movement in Salem, opportunity to reframe the Early Ed component at Bowditch, and the need for more Early Ed.

Summation

- Receiving school component is very important
- Recognizing that if this does not happen, that Plan B would primarily be doubling down efforts to hopefully try to improve on what they are doing at the K-5 level - left after the
- Move out of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades over to the Collins - not Superintendent Ruiz's recommendation

Additional Information for Next Meeting

- Members agreed to get some timeline and whatever information Superintendent Ruiz can share on the Spanish multiple linguistic options that might exist within their district to a better handle on receiving districts
- Suite of services that would be available maybe some of the hypotheticals may be teased – what that might look like
- Further discussion on the name - Mayor Driscoll is open for ideas, insights, and suggestions on the name idea – maybe have some offline conversations about it

Members agreed to wait to receive the additional information for careful review, have a deliberation and vote for the recommendation listed on the agenda at the next regular School Committee meeting, and table it as needed to the following regular School Committee meeting on either March 8 or 12. Members agreed for the March 5th regular School Committee meeting cancellation, as not all members would be present.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole (COW) School Committee this evening. Ms. Manning entertained the motion to adjourn. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials

COW Notice 2/12/18

Proposed Recommendation by Superintendent

Presentation to School Committee 2/12/18 (Keeping Our Promise Increasing Equity and Access in the Salem Public Schools)

2018-19 Enrollment Targets for Student Assignment Overview

Data Packet for 2/12/12 School Committee Meeting and Public Hearing

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 26, 2018

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, February 26, 2018 at 7:04 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

Members Present: Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. James Fleming, Ms. Kristine Wilson, Ms. Ana Nuncio, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Amanda Campbell, and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, and Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications

Call to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the regular meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting Held February 5, 2018

Ms. Nuncio motioned to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held on February 5, 2018. Ms. Wilson seconded the Motion. The Motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the School Committee Meeting and Public Hearing Held February 12, 2018

Discussion

Ms. Nuncio notified of minor corrections that need be made.

Ms. Campbell motioned to approve the Minutes of the Special School Committee meeting and Public Hearing held on February 12, 2018, as amended. Ms. Wilson seconded the Motion. The Motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting Held February 12, 2018

Discussion

Mayor Driscoll asked to table the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting to allow additional time to review.

Mr. Fleming motioned to table the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting held February 12, 2018. Ms. Manning seconded the Motion. The Minutes of the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting is tabled for March 8, 2018.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

Diana Vargas, 79 Willson Street, referred to a document that Superintendent Ruiz handed out at the last School Committee meeting and addressed specific items that was listed on the document that outlines supports that the district implemented at the Nathaniel Bowditch School as an intervention plan to turn the school around from 2015 through 2018. Ms. Vargas contrasted points that were listed as part of the new intervention plan, explained what they are, and provided details of each. Ms. Vargas concluded that the newly implemented supports listed on the Superintendent's handout were not intentional to improve the Nathaniel Bowditch School, because they were district initiative supports where every school received the same. Ms. Vargas continued that it is hard for her to believe that the list on the Superintendent's handout is a reflection of any hard work that was put into the Bowditch School to make it a better school. Ms. Vargas asked Superintendent Ruiz how did she exactly support the Nathaniel Bowditch to turn it into a successful school, how are the needs of their population exactly supported, and how is the promise to increase equity and access in all Salem Schools kept?

Ms. Vargas asked School Committee members to consider that the Superintendent's current proposal to close the Nathaniel Bowditch School would not work, gaps would widen further with time, students would get lost in the shuffle of the transition, and the plan would create additional problems for the other schools that are receiving the Bowditch School students. Ms. Vargas asked of other alternatives to the proposal they have not received an answer for and ask action be taken to explore every possibility other than the mere response that the state would otherwise have to take over. Ms. Vargas continued that she cannot help but feel there are other motives to the Superintendent's proposal; that promises have been made behind closed doors for an Early Childhood Center or other they do not know of. What are they planning to do with the additional space that would be left at the Nathaniel Bowditch School after such a transition is made and how would this be explained to the community? Ms. Vargas read a letter aloud, on behalf of Victoria Chance, on the comparison of a Superintendent versus a teacher. Victoria Chance was not able to attend this evening and asked Ms. Vargas to please read the letter for her. Victoria Chance was an intern principal and reading specialist at the Nathaniel Bowditch School.

Daniel Charis, 7 Surrey Road, Construction Project Executive, spoke on behalf of the Horace Mann Laboratory School and letter he provided School Committee members with yesterday. Mr. Charis shared his concerns on safety and infrastructure. The Horace Mann School should share the same safety standards as the other schools in the community. Mr. Charis continued that it is not about closing a school or relocating another but a safer and improved experience for the entire Salem Public School community.

Fawaz Abusharkh, 4 Harrison Road, said that the Horace Mann School deserved a new school for a very long time and shared his views as to why it was not done. Mr. Abusharkh stated that both the Nathaniel Bowditch and the Horace Mann Laboratory School could be combined but that it should be done without having to pay the high cost that comes with changing the Bowditch School name. Mr. Abusharkh said the Nathaniel Bowditch School had very good teachers before but ineffective administration and still do. Mr. Abusharkh asks the Committee to maintain equal balance by allowing all Bowditch School teachers apply for their jobs, all students be distributed, and work together to resolve the issues. Mr. Abusharkh addressed School Committee members by name and asked they please save the Nathaniel Bowditch School and refuse approval of the Superintendent's recommendation to dissolving it.

Mr. Abusharkh asked School Committee members why they plan to change the name of the Nathaniel Bowditch School, which would serve as an added and unnecessary expense that comes with changing a school name.

Nadia Nieves, student, 2 Sophia Road, shared that she has not seen any positive change in support of the Nathaniel Bowditch School. There are rumors at the school that it will be closing and everyone would be separated. Ms. Nieves asked School Committee members for another alternative to closing the school.

Gabriely Payano, 12 First Street, shared that she had to explain to her younger sister of the possible change of school and separation of her friends. They have embodied their experience in each classroom and hallway where their work is displayed with much pride at the Nathaniel Bowditch School. Ms. Payano shared further positive details about the Bowditch school. She wants to graduate from there and asked School Committee members to please consider an alternative plan and not close the school.

Joseph Cambone, Dean of the School of Education at Salem State University, 41 West Newton Street, Boston, MA expressed his support for the Superintendent's recommendation. Mr. Cambone based his support in his professional experience and research. Mr. Cambone said the School of Education at Salem State University wish to work beside the Superintendent's recommendation as they increase district capacity teaching students for whom English is a second language and will prepare new guidance counselors, adjustment councilors, and reading specialists along with them. They'll expand their work together in the area of teacher leadership. They look forward to their journey ahead together.

Anya Dokanau, 260 Washington, shared a brief history of her educational journey, views in the eyes of students, and asked School Committee members to consider the students and their needs first in their decision-making.

Mohammed, student at the Nathaniel Bowditch School, shared that it is not fair for the Nathaniel Bowditch School students to have to separate from their friends. He hopes the School Committee would rather allow the Horace Mann Laboratory School be moved into their school building, because there is much space at the Bowditch School for them.

Peggy Fucillo, 4 Cedar Hill Road, Former Teacher at the Nathaniel Bowditch School, shared that she has a hard time with what has been said, the Nathaniel Bowditch School has struggled to meet state performance standards for years due to the large percentage of Hispanic students and low-income families at the school. Ms. Fucillo said her opinion is that this speaks to the lack of resources, teacher preparation, and the impact of the biases that turn community resources, language, cultures, multiple perspectives into deficits or problems, blaming students, etc. Ms. Fucillo detailed what is lacking at the Nathaniel Bowditch School. What the Nathaniel Bowditch School needs is an experienced competent administration with appropriate and explicit learning and behavioral expectations, coupled with knowledge of the community and cultures being served, staff professional development, and immediate new staff hire to fill all the gaps. Ms. Fucillo focused on the students, their resource and on the psychological impact that the news of the Bowditch school closing has on them. They have received news as something related to their low performance that carries a negative effect. Students have withstood the many changes that have taken place at the Bowditch school and news of the school closing is not going to make it better. This will be in the student's minds and hearts. How will this be internalized? Ms. Fucillo continued by asking about the consequences to the Superintendent's proposal. Ms. Fucillo continued that she believes they owe it to their students to fully consider what the psychological impact will be and how it could be manifested. Ms. Fucillo stated that the choice is clear to her and recalled that money from the state, to end segregation, built the Collins Middle and the Nathaniel Bowditch Schools. The Superintendent's proposal is to displace all the Latino students, which would disgrace, discredit, and dishonor all that the Bowditch School has stood for. Ms. Fucillo asks why the decision is rushed and urgent, they were notified four weeks ago.

Ms. Fucillo implored, to the School Committee, "does not this decision that would impact hundreds of students and their families warrant more thought, evaluation, exploration, and deliberation?"

Dr. Nate Bryant, 22 Puritan Road, shared that he supports the Superintendent's plan. The first thing he learned as a previous School Committee member was that his job was to make decisions in the best interest of all students. He vividly remembers being concerned about the revolving door of principals at the Nathaniel Bowditch School. Dr. Bryant continued that he thought that the decisions he made while serving as School Committee member were in the best interest of the students which included listening to some parents acknowledge that while there were issues at Bowditch spoke very favorably about the Bowditch community – sentiments that meant a lot to him and gave him hope of improvement. Dr. Bryant continued that the Bowditch School is underperforming. They have two choices: take the approach that things will get better by trying harder or make a decision, grounded in research, which shows that integrated schools have more positive impact in student learning than segregated schools. Dr. Bryant continued that he also believes in Superintendent Ruiz, in her many years of working districts not so different from theirs. Dr. Bryant quoted Horace Mann, who was credited for being the first American advocate for free public education.

Nestor Groom, resident of Salem, shared that he does not think that closing the Nathaniel Bowditch School would solve the problem and hopes the right decision is made. Mr. Groom said that the closing of the Bowditch School only serves to provoke families against families and the questioned why this decision was not made before or during the time of the Superintendent's election. There is plenty of room at the Nathaniel Bowditch School for the Horace Mann Laboratory School. Mr. Groom said that closing the Bowditch School would not solve issues of segregation and asked that politics not be practiced in education.

A member of the audience, 80-year-old Boston resident, shared that no other school compared to the Horace Mann School, which educated teachers in a very rich environment. The gentleman countered mention of teachers having only 3 years teaching experience. He does not think that means anything; it is about who has the passion to teach that matters. He cringes at the word segregation in Salem, Massachusetts, said they are all Americans, and wondered why that word 'segregation' is mentioned in this educational forum. It is ridiculous, unheard of, and a by-product of the last election. He pleads the state needs to be re-approached at the Secretary of State in Massachusetts. He walked around the Horace Mann School and observed there is no room. He thinks they should incorporate it into the Salem State University and returned to its original tenets of why it was there. It should be a pilot school as it was before. It should be a place of inspiration. He requests a rebirth of the Horace Mann School on the same Salem State University campus location. The Nathaniel Bowditch School also has a distinction as did the Pickering and many other schools in Salem. Salem was the lighthouse for the rest of the United States, for many years. The gentleman emphasized the need to eliminate the mention of segregation as everyone is an American regardless of the language they speak. He hopes to have inspired others to believe in what is best and not be afraid to express their concerns and shared that the value of every person is in their passion for what they do.

Beth Kontos, President of Salem Teachers Union, 237 Centre Street, Danvers, shared that what has happened at the Nathaniel Bowditch School has been a series of mistakes and events, part of it has been a choice process from the past where families have chosen where their child would go to school without regard to the needs of the students. Ms. Kontos continued that she feels it needs to stop. The goal of the Superintendent's plan is desegregation. They can faithfully watch that the demographics and socio-economics are watch every year, if this proposal is approved, to make sure it does not reoccur. Ms. Kontos continued that she thinks desegregation would slowly happen but it has to begin some place. She feels they need to make sure they have the supports in place and appropriate number of English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Education reading teachers. They need to make sure that they can attract and keep their teachers to prevent from having to seek teachers every year. They want to ensure this is the

place they want to work in, and students want to return to, every day. Ms. Kontos stated that teachers are far better when they are together.

Alex Pacheco, Salem resident, shared that the issues of the Nathaniel Bowditch School is not a coincidence, it is a shame, and what happens in Massachusetts has repercussions nationwide. Mr. Pacheco stated that the message that is presented this evening will have nationwide effect and asked School Committee members not to hang the students with their decisions - students should not pay for adult mistakes.

Yoleny Ynoa, Salem resident, asked each School Committee member, by name, not to close the Nathaniel Bowditch School.

Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz

Pillar #1: Create a Vibrant K-12 Teaching & Learning Ecosystem

Keeping Our Promise: Increasing Equity and Access in Salem Public Schools

Superintendent Ruiz reported that the data of the Nathaniel Bowditch School is striking and underscored that the district is academically failing the Bowditch School students and families. Ms. Ruiz clarified that this has been a systemic failure that occurred over many years and does not reflect the abilities of the students and the hard work of teachers and leaders of the Nathaniel Bowditch School. This most recent MCAS data has created a heightened sense of urgency for herself and entire management team to urge School Committee members to act decisively about the Bowditch School. They have invested on interventions at the school. It is fair to say that they are in plan D at this point as they have undergone through several plans at the school. Superintendent Ruiz stated that she is proud to say that they have worked hand-in-hand with the Salem Teacher's Union in collaboration to make some of those interventions happen and reminded that the School Committee refused the Department of Education's framework for school turnaround to affect some of these interventions. Superintendent Ruiz reported that they have increased learning time at the school through an extended learning grant and said they have invested in leadership. There was a budget request, for the 2015 fiscal year, of an additional Assistant Principal, in addition to the current principal and dean of student success. They have invested in additional curriculum, for specific populations at the Bowditch School, such as REACH for reading and English as a Second Language (ESL). They have added staffing/3 full time substitutes to support the learning on the social emotional needs of its students.

Ms. Ruiz explained that it is often times difficult to fill positions during the middle of the school year. They have supported teacher practice and invested in the bilingual capacity of the Bowditch School. The Nathaniel Bowditch School is the only school in the district that has a Bilingual Secretary. The situation at the Nathaniel Bowditch School was not a result of deterioration that happened in a year but over the course of years. Superintendent Ruiz continued that it has been 10 years, they have a clear downward trajectory in the percentile ranking of the school compared to K-8 schools in the state of Massachusetts, and the state may likely intervene if they do not act now.

Superintendent Ruiz reported they have considered moving the Nathaniel Bowditch School middle school grades over to the Collins Middle School as it has ample space and is able to welcome the students and keeping the Bowditch School as a K-5 elementary school. The problem with that is that it would address the issue of the middle school while leaving a failing K-5 school in place, because the issues seen on the trends (shown on the Superintendent's presentation slide) are not exclusive to middle or elementary but the entire Bowditch school. They could not consider the possibility of merging the Horace Mann and the Bowditch Schools, with the recognition that each school was facing its own inequity, because they would be merging the two lowest performing schools in the district. The model that the Carlton School has in place is predicated on the promotion of students as they are ready and master the standards. The Carlton

School has three periods throughout the year where students are transitioned from one grade to the next. Another aspect of the Carlton School's model to keep in mind is predicated on a staffing structure and teacher training that is key to the execution model. Highly effective teachers primarily give instructions in small groups. Assigning close to 220 students at once to the Carlton School would swamp their model and make it difficult to execute that model effectively. They also looked into the possibility of creating another in-district Horace Mann School similar to the Back Bay. Superintendent Ruiz shared that she thinks they can do this based on the progress that the Salem schools have made over the past 3 years and her personal observations. They have physical and seating space, district and school level structures, and they will do this right. All elementary and K-8 Salem schools have space to receive students from the Nathaniel Bowditch School. The Witchcraft Heights, Bates, and Collins Middle Schools have been highlighted because those are the schools where they would be adding more classroom space to increase their capacity. These schools have the physical space and they do not want to significantly alter the district's class sizes.

Superintendent Ruiz invited three principals to share their experiences, what they know about students who have transferred over to their attending schools, and how they are preparing for possible transition. Lee Ann Smith, Principal of Witchcraft Heights Elementary School shared her thoughts on Superintendent Ruiz's plan and willingness to prepare to receive and welcome transferring students from the Nathaniel Bowditch School. Thomas Milaschewski, Principal of Bates Elementary School emphasized that they are ready, prepared, and excited to welcome new students and families to their community if the School Committee votes in support of the Superintendent's recommendations. They understand how difficult transition is for any student and confirmed they would work extremely hard to ensure the students feel academically, behaviorally, and socially comfortable. They look forward to welcoming the Nathaniel Bowditch School students and families into the Bates community. Glenn Burns, Principal of Collins Middle School, shared they have a world class STEM program at the Collins school that has two classes, at each grade level, that scholars go through and pointed out other available technologies and resources that the Nathaniel Bowditch School students can use. The Collins School is happy to welcome the students and ready to offer them all that they have available to helping them achieve their dreams.

Superintendent Ruiz reported that all positions of the Nathaniel Bowditch School would also transfer to the schools, they would have enough positions to guarantee all professional positions. Ms. Ruiz talked about anticipated additional resources, special education services, referred members to a handout that contained a list of some of the infrastructures in the district, and continued the presentation walking members through each slide of the presentation. Members asked questions and shared discussion. Superintendent Ruiz asked School Committee members permission to address families of the Nathaniel Bowditch School students in Spanish. Ms. Ruiz addressed the families in Spanish and explained her statement in English for the School Committee members.

Discussion

School Committee members asked questions, further discussed the proposal, and requested further information from Superintendent Ruiz. Ms. Ruiz agreed to provide responses and further information.

Action Item

Deliberation and Vote on the Approval of the Superintendent's Recommendation to Close the Nathaniel Bowditch School and Transfer Students to the Other Schools in the District and to Relocate the Horace Mann Laboratory School to the Building Located at 79 Willson Street in Salem

Discussion

School Committee members agreed to table the deliberation and vote on the Superintendent's proposal for the next School Committee meeting on March 8, 2018.

The action item is tabled for 3/8/18

Finance Report

a. Approval of Warrants

February 22, 2018 in the amount of \$359, 339.37

March 1, 2018 in the amount of \$388, 302.51

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve both warrants in the amounts listed on the Agenda. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The Motion was approved.

b. Budget Transfers - There were no budget transfers

Subcommittee Reports - There were no Subcommittee reports

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mr. Fleming said there was a report today from a constituent of a regarding that a MBTA bus has been seen dropping a bus load of kids at the High School from Lynn and asked Superintendent Ruiz to please look into it. Ms. Ruiz said she would.

Mayor Driscoll wanted to confirm in advance with School Committee members if they feel they have everything they need to feel prepared to vote on the Superintendent's proposal. Members questioned the name issue and understand that the proposal does not include the topic of the name. Mayor Driscoll commented they have a policy regarding name changes and that would be a separate deliberation and vote, a separate process. Ms. Campbell asked for the average access SGP that she had previously requested. Mr. Fleming reminded they would receive the split data between the MCAS scores and K-6 grades.

Ms. Nuncio shared that a Salem resident suggested instituting community service between students of Salem High School and other schools who are willing to participate in the Home for the Ages residence. Ms. Nuncio asked if that can be formalized and offered to send this suggestion to each School Committee member for review. Mayor Driscoll commented that she can circulate it from the COA. They organize students to help with everything from shoveling to other services that seniors sometimes need within their homes. Ms. Driscoll said that it sounds like something they could explore and help formalizes a pipeline. Ms. Manning shared concern that someone should be vigilant to watch over these services to ensure proper safety for the seniors. Mayor Driscoll commented that perhaps the COA can be involved in that.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

Jimmy, Boston resident, responded in reference to an earlier question that School Committee member Mr. Fleming asked Superintendent Ruiz on how they would be monitoring the progress of the Nathaniel Bowditch School students. Jimmy explained that student results can be monitored with today's technology. They can tag each student every semester or term and get a read out of how the Bowditch School students are doing, at different places of their assignment. That should provide proof as to what direction they are taking and whether they are improving or not. He thinks it is essential that they use a tracking system.

Peggy Fucillo, 4 Cedar Hill Road, Former Teacher at the Nathaniel Bowditch School said she has not heard about options and thinks it is critical that there are other options to choose from than just closing the

Nathaniel Bowditch School. They could incrementally look at other schools that have turned around. Ms. Fucillo stated she is willing to investigate, go to schools, and help out in any way she can. Turnaround is possible and has happened before. Students that attended the Nathaniel Bowditch School and have moved on to High School are doing very well. She knows this can happen when everyone works together to make it happen. Ms. Fucillo asks the School Committee to look at alternatives and into programs and establish them at the school to attract students throughout the city for a successful outcome.

Fawaz Abusharkh, 4 Harrison Road, stated that the proposal was poorly prepared and presented within a very short amount of time for review. Mr. Abusharkh said that he knows that Principals, leaders, and teachers do their job well and care for their students with no need to add additional supportive statements in favor of the Superintendent's proposal. Mr. Abusharkh addressed members of the School Committee individually, said they should honor the community, and that it should be the first thing to consider.

Andrea Hoffman, 3 Victory Road, thanked the Superintendent for principals to share details of how they plan to welcome the Nathaniel Bowditch School students, which is very important to her. She wanted to know this and said this information is very important to everyone. It is all about the students. Ms. Hoffman stated that Mr. Horace Mann wants to keep his name, said she thinks he should, and that it is not about keeping a name but the success of the students. She does not want to see the Horace Mann fail, set this all aside, and start thinking about the education of the students. She wants the supports in place, parents involved, and asked parents to please make sure their child do their homework. Ms. Hoffman continued that they all need to work together, they are all parents who care about their children, and emphasized that the school name is not what's important. She asked School Committee members not to let the issues continue and to fix it for both the Nathaniel Bowditch and the Horace Mann Schools as they deserve a better education and all the supports as does all of their other schools.

Farrah Wilson, 25 Pickman Road, taught for more than 20 years, shared that she spoke to her mom, who has been an educational advocate for over 40 years, and who had strong concern as to whether the Nathaniel Bowditch School students would remain at the Bowditch school and whether the name would be kept. The other concern is of going back to haunted happenings; it has been a tense year at Salem. Ms. Wilson stated that she and the people of Salem would like to think they trust the members of the School Committee with their experience, expertise, and community input to make a decision in the best interest of the students. Ms. Wilson stated that she is excited that March 8 looks like a deadline.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming entertained the motion to adjourn. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports
School Committee Agenda February 26, 2018
Minutes of the February 5, 2018 Regular School Committee Meeting
Minutes of the February 12, 2018 Special School Committee Meeting and Public Hearing
Minutes of the February 12, 2018 Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting
Presentation to School Committee
Excellent Language Learning for All Handout
District Infrastructure List Handout



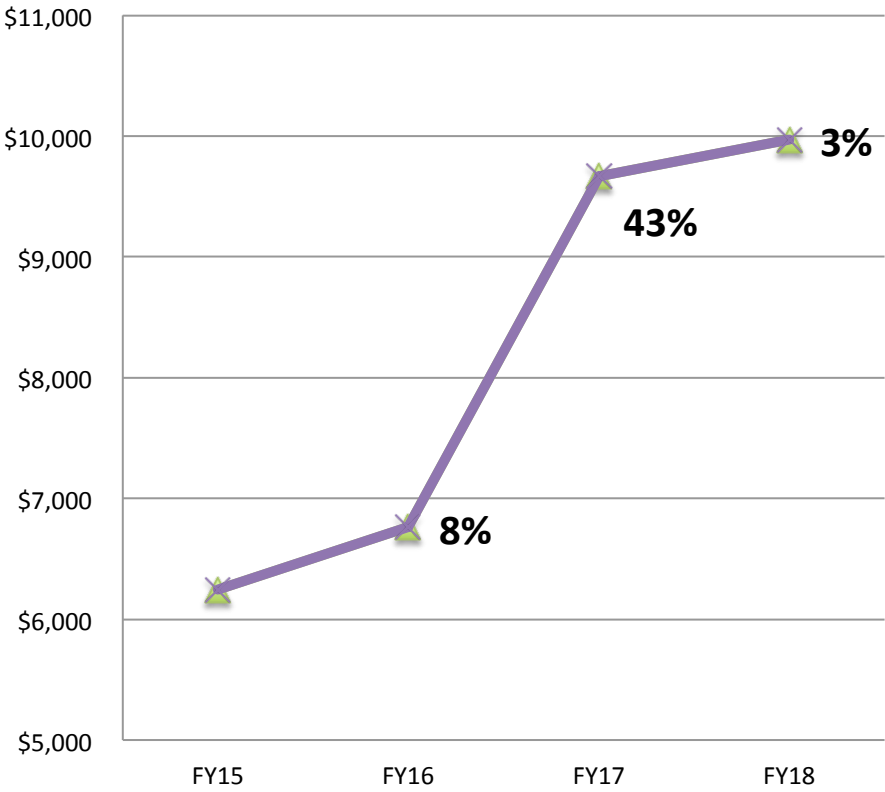
Keeping Our Promise Increasing Equity and Access in the Salem Public Schools

Presentation to School Committee

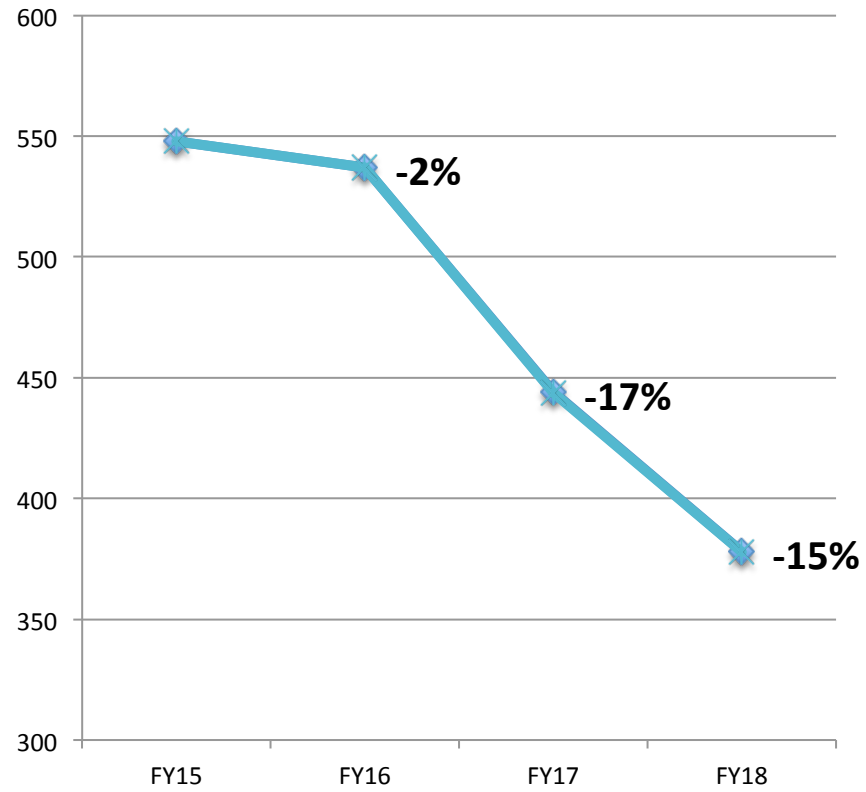
March 8, 2018

NBS Per Pupil Expenditure & Enrollment, FY15 to FY18

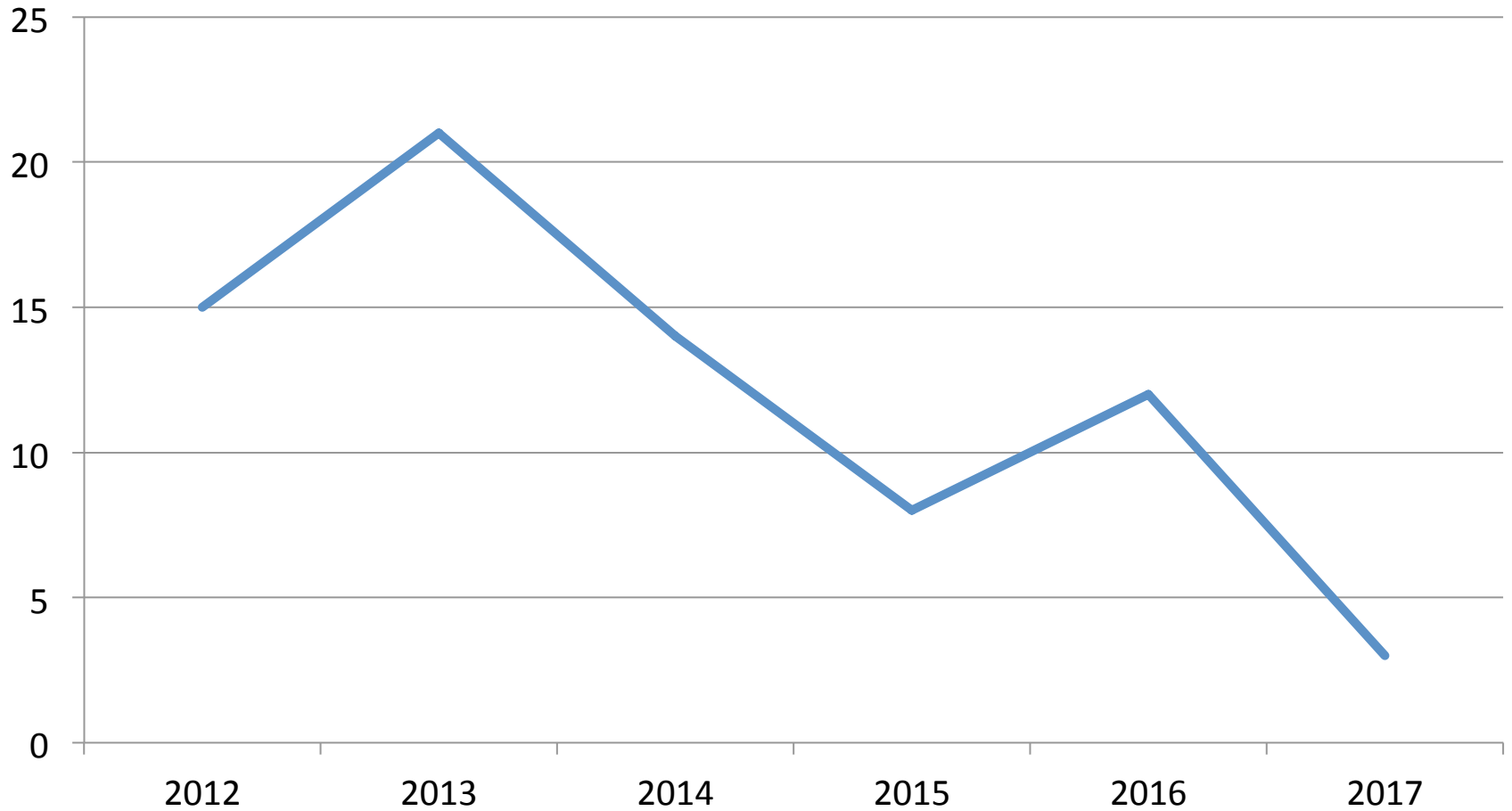
Per Pupil Expenditure



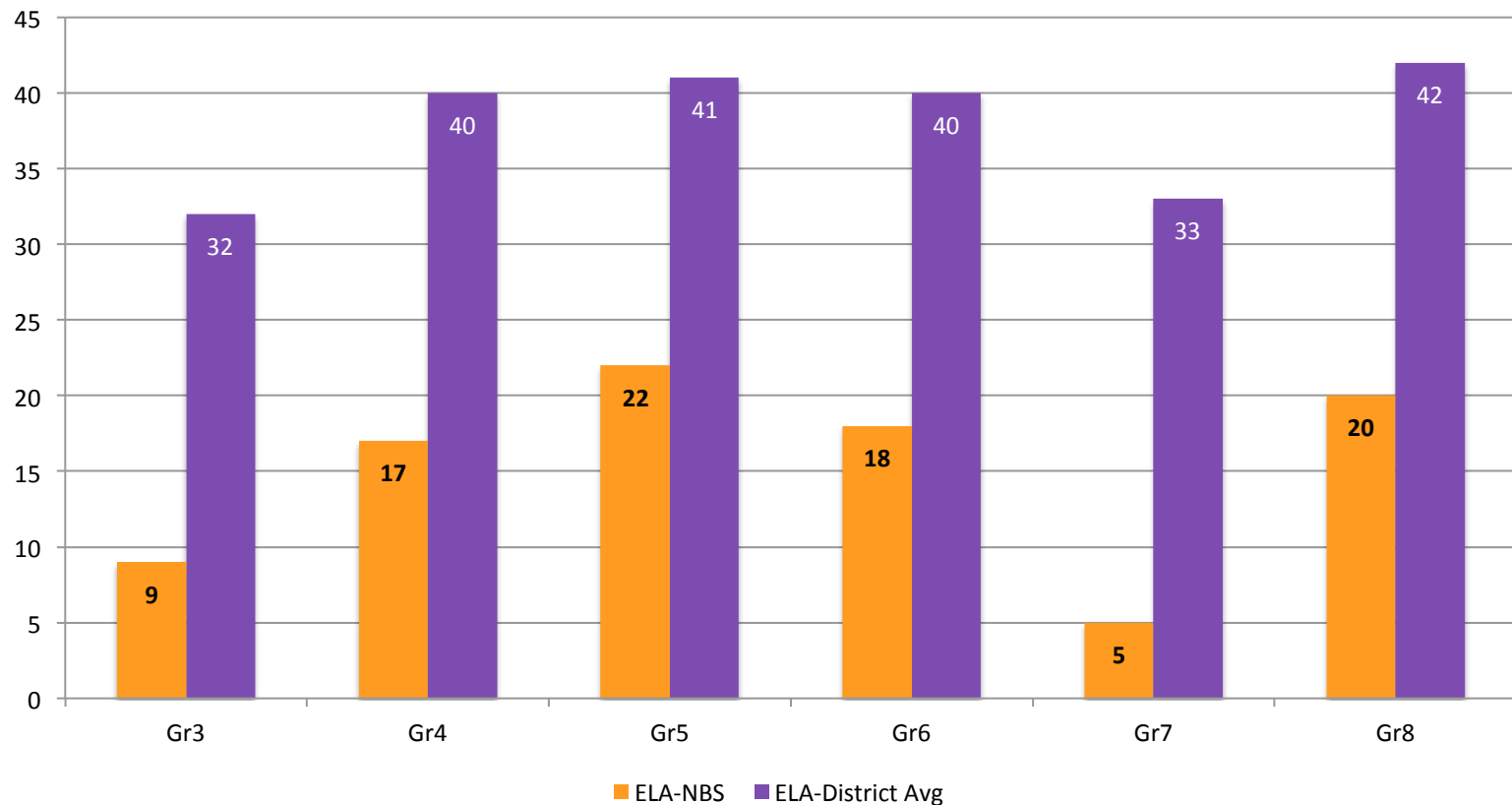
NBS Enrollment



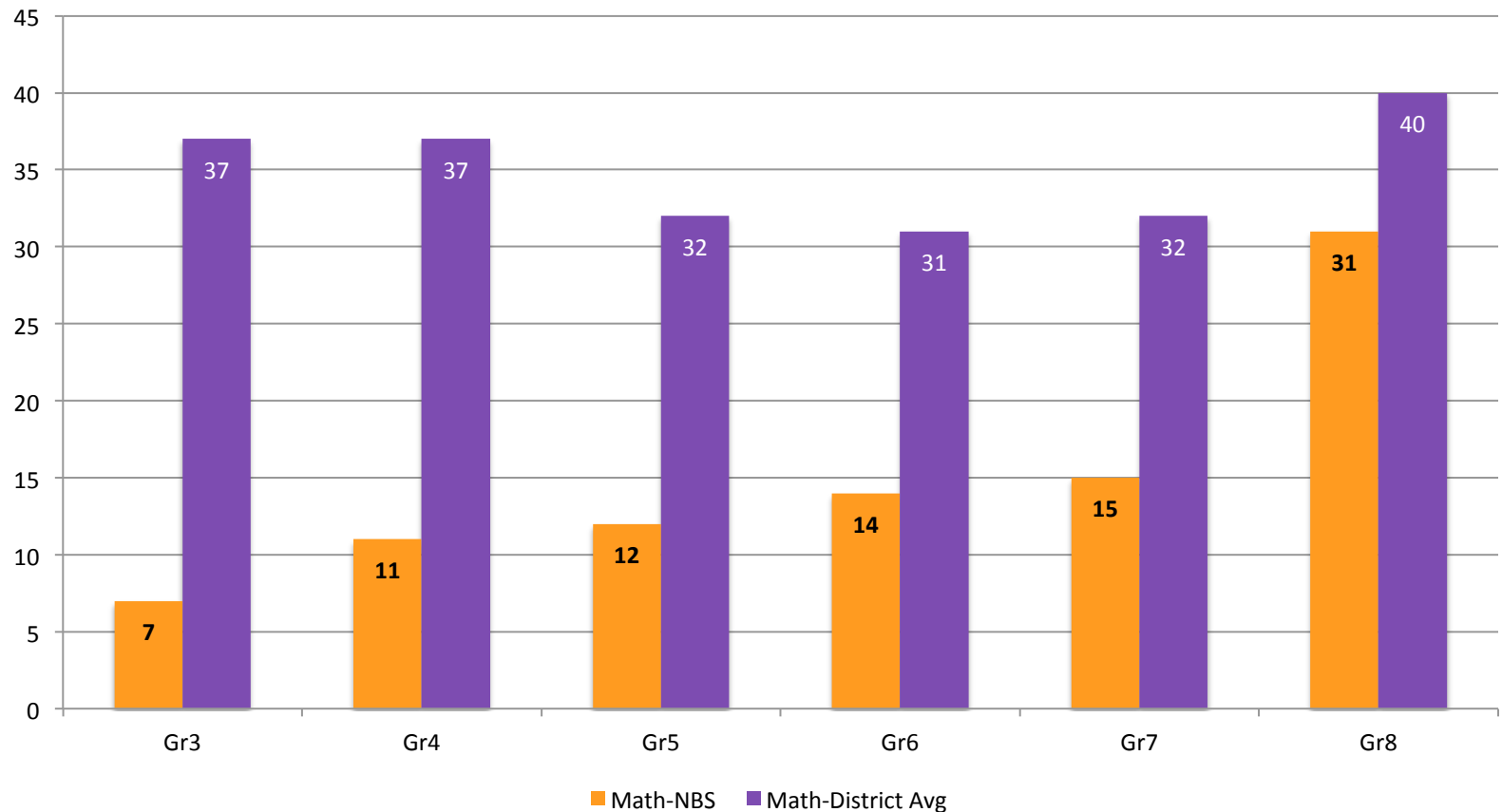
NBS Achievement Percentile Trend



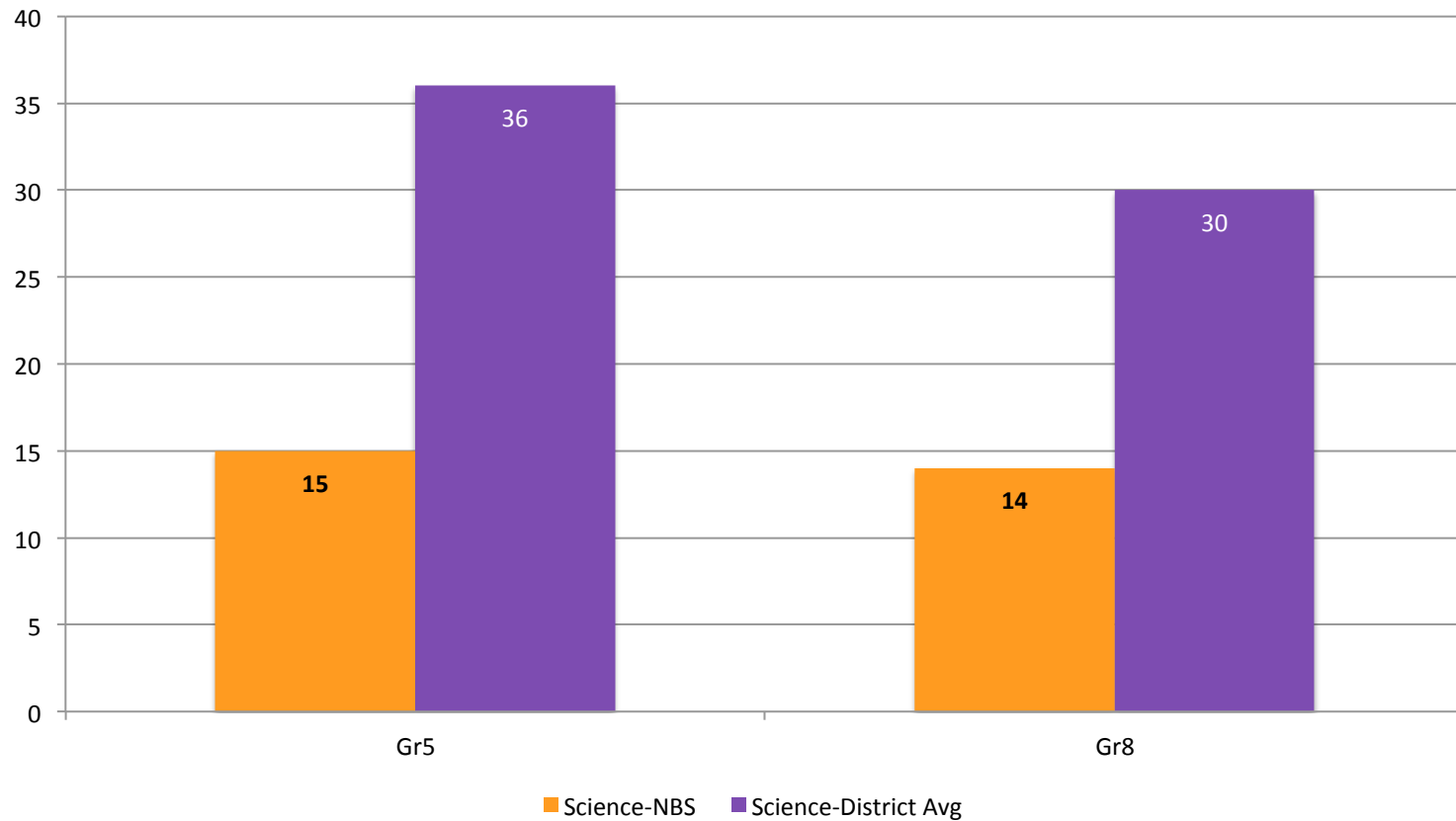
2017 ELA - % Meets or Exceeds Expectations by Grade, NBS & District



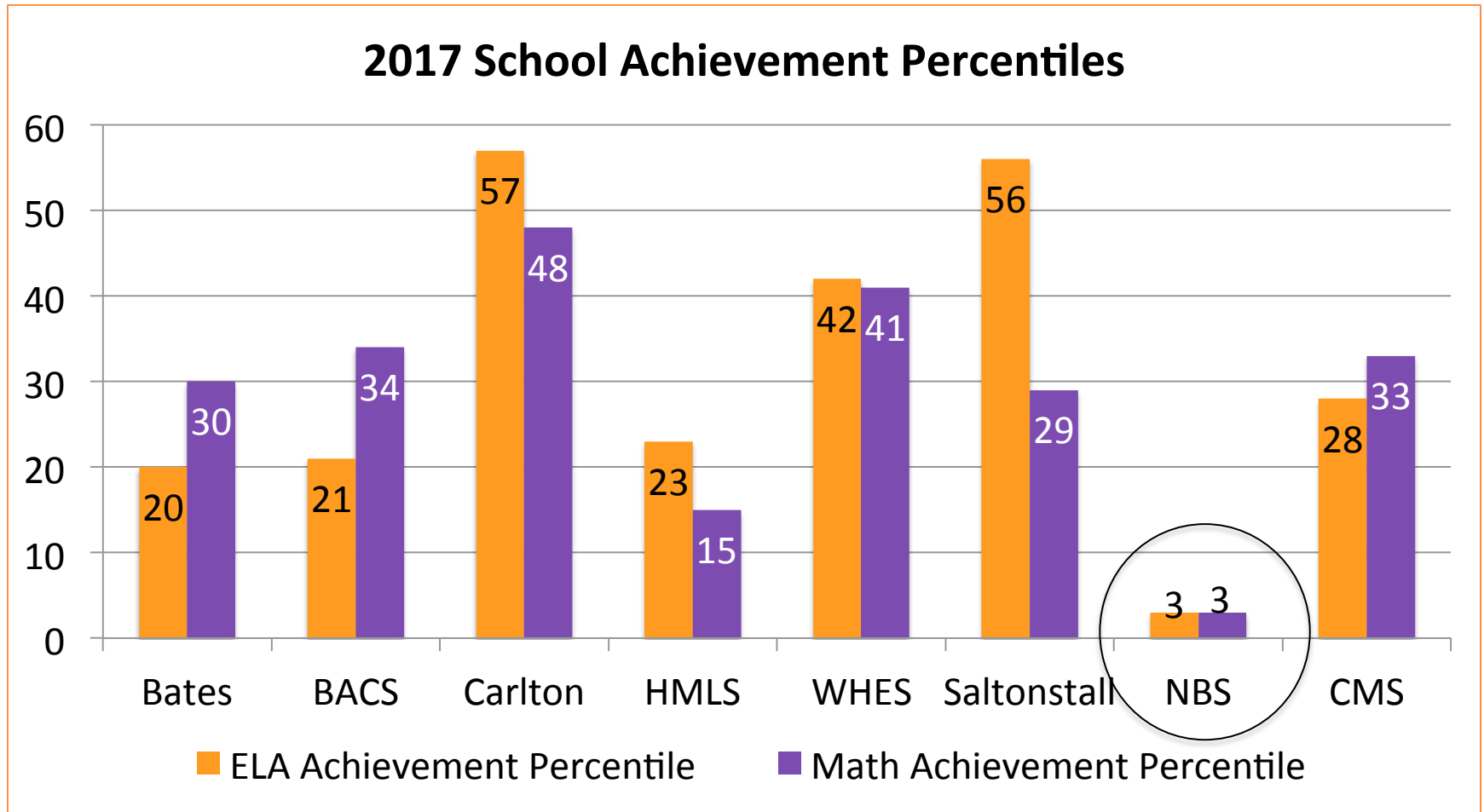
2017 Math - % Meets or Exceeds Expectations by Grade, NBS & District



2017 Science- % Proficient or Advanced by Grade, NBS & District



2017 Achievement Percentile



NBS - % Economically Disadvantaged

Grade:	K	1	2	3	4	5
% Econ. Disad.	75.0%	80.0%	81.8%	68.4%	70.8%	76.9%

Grade:	6	7	8
% Econ. Disad.	76.7%	66.7%	71.4%

NBS Overall:	74.4%
Elementary:	75%
Middle:	72%

Options Considered Not Recommended

- **Move 6-8 to CMS / Leave K-5 NBS**
- **Merge K-5 NBS with K-5 HMLS**
- **Combine K-5 NBS with K-5 Carlton**
- **Convert to NBS to In-district Horace Mann**

