

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Study Committee met on Thursday, November 30, 2017 at 4:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut. Committee members present: Dr. Taylor, Mr. Augur

Other Board members present: Mr. Moore

Committee members absent: Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Yamartino

Administration present: Mrs. Neubig, Business Manager; Mr. Sadinsky, Principal of Strong School; Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Augur called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion made by Mr. Moore and seconded by Mr. Augur, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes – October 26, 2017

On a motion made by Dr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Moore, the minutes of October 26, 2017 were unanimously approved.

Silver Petrucelli Update

Dr. Veronesi updated the committee on the preliminary findings from Silver Petrucelli. Their report included the projected enrollment through 2026-2027 that illustrates the enrollment decrease from 1649 (current) to 1403 in 10 years. Pre-k through grade 2 enrollment shows a slight decrease of 20 students, 3-5 stays stable, 6-8 decreases from a projected 418 next year to 352 in 10 years and 9-12 shows a decrease from the current enrollment of 531 to a projected enrollment of 379 in 10 years.

The grade configurations noted about were used as a starting point for projected building capacity given Dr. Veronesi's suggestion for maximizing student learning given the building space and viable options. In this scenario there would be a need for additional classrooms at Brewster School. All other school buildings would not need alterations/renovations to accommodate the projected student population. The high school classroom size is below current recommendations by 100 square feet. CRHS classrooms are 690 square feet with recommended square footage for the high school being 850-900 square feet.

Discussion was held regarding the use of available space in the high school and making use of temporary options including portables in order to decrease necessary funding, closing another school building as soon as possible and working towards a permanent solution over time. Concerns were raised relative to the two-program design and the availability of choice for parents and families in the district. Dr. Veronesi indicated that educational visioning for the future would begin with a group of school staff and would be open to the public and other teachers to attend and add input. She expressed the difficulty of making the best educational decision for students within the context of using existing space in the short-term and expressed caution in making a decision that is intended to be for the short-term but becomes a long-term

solution. Mr. Moore talked about the need to create building space especially at the high school level that supports our academic vision for the future and encourages students who may opt for private, magnet and vocational schools to stay in the district.

Regarding the concern about sustaining a two program design in the district, Dr. Veronesi felt that we have an obligation to meet the pressing economic needs and we should see this as an opportunity to refocus on the future. In particular, she noted that inherent in an effective educational approach is the presence of student choice, authentic learning, the development of student voice, support of the arts in a district where visual and performing arts are valued, and the integration of curriculum as this is practical and best in terms of student learning. She also talked about the positive impact of maintaining a HOT school model.

Building Usage and Academic Planning Approach

Discussed in preceding agenda item.

Korn School Building Status Update

No official information was available from our attorney, but Chuck Stengel, Durham Board of Finance, indicated that the Board of Selectmen authorized the First Selectmen to sign the MOU with RSD 13 and the MOU with Middlefield. Concerns that were raised by Board of Education members were sent by Dr. Veronesi to our legal counsel and were shared with the selectmen at their meeting. Mr. Moore raised for consideration the option of Durham using the building if they began paying holding costs and wondered if a portion of the building could be approved for a CO.

Public Comment

Carl Stoup noted that the existing state budget is still out of balance. The problem has not gone away and is getting worse. Mr. Stoup thinks we should look at what we will create not what we will lose in terms of programs.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Moore and seconded by Dr. Taylor, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:05 PM.