

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Study Committee met on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 4:30 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks and Dr. Taylor

Committee members absent: Mrs. Boyle

Other board members present: Mr. Moore and Mr. Yamartino (arrived late)

Administration present: Mrs. Neubig, Business Manager

Mr. Augur called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of Agenda**

No amendments could be made to the agenda as it is a special meeting.

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion to approve to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the agenda as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Finalize Utilization Committee Update Document**

Dr. Taylor noted that the arrows were misaligned on the printed copy and wondered if the arrows would lead to any confusion. It was agreed to change the arrows to text. Mr. Moore questioned the per pupil cost and Mr. Augur suggested putting estimated savings per year in for options A and B with zero for option C. Everyone agreed that that would help to clarify the options.

Both Mr. Moore and Dr. Friedrich felt the one-page document came out very nice. The Utilization Committee will review the final draft and it will then go to the full Board.

### **Review Utilization Committee Survey**

Mr. Augur reviewed what options could be included in the survey. Dr. Friedrich suggested that some of the instructions are confusing and it was suggested to use a 1-5 scale. There will also be an area for comments. There was some discussion about how the scoring of the surveys would be done. Dr. Taylor was concerned that not everyone will fill the surveys out completely and he is more in favor of simpler scales using 1-5 and words.

Dr. Taylor would also want question 1 to be put in rank order. Discussion continued about specific wording for the various questions. Dr. Friedrich asked about cost information being included in the

survey and he suggested adding the per year savings. Mr. Yamartino asked if the costs shown were net of any reimbursement and Mr. Augur explained that the range was the gross to the net and some areas did not have any reimbursement. Mr. Yamartino suggested showing just the net. He also suggested that the worst case be shown in the options with portables.

Mr. Moore asked about the demographics section and it was discussed whether to add grandchildren to the survey and how the question should be worded as well as whether actual numbers should be included.

Mr. Augur summarized that they will redraft the survey, circulate it and discuss it further at the next full Board meeting.

### **Physical Plant Security Update**

Mrs. Neubig reported that the State Police have been in the District all week, one inside the high school and one patrolling the parking lot at the high school. The third officer is visiting each school at drop-off and pick-up times as well as at different times during the day. All three troopers had lunch with the students today. Mr. Moore has also been at the high school every morning greeting the students and they had Dunkin Donuts available on Monday. Mr. Moore commented that the students at the high school are still nervous. He explained that 250 students were absent from the high school on Monday, but felt that many more students attended today.

Mrs. Neubig also explained that the \$22,000 security grant the District had received will likely be used to pay for the State Police. This grant was reimbursement for security upgrades that have already been completed. Dr. Taylor felt that this was not a sustainable model and wondered why it was necessary if it wasn't a credible threat. He does understand the psychological effect, but is concerned that it can produce a negative effect too. Mr. Moore explained that this was partly done on a recommendation from the State Police and will continue through March 14<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Taylor didn't see the necessity of keeping police on-site if there is no threat. Mrs. Neubig explained that this is not intended to continue beyond the week. Mrs. Neubig explained that they have been touring the schools and looking at the camera coverage, the buzz-in systems and discussing vestibule upgrades with the architects which would be reimbursable if they meet State requirements. There are several options that are being discussed. They met with a FEMA representative this morning and he spoke in favor of vestibules. Once the Board approves a plan, they will look at available surpluses, delaying of capital projects, possibly redirecting some of the debt funding for bonding.

Mrs. Neubig reported that the vestibules with ballistic and blast-proof glass are the most expensive, at about \$250,000 per building, but allowable at a 52.5% reimbursable rate by the State as long as certain requirements are met. Mr. Moore also mentioned that if bonded, debt service for this project would not hit until next year. The timing for something like this could be nine months from start to finish. Mr. Augur mentioned that vestibules are being installed quite a lot nationwide.

Dr. Taylor asked if there was any evidence that this would actually change school security and reduce shootings. Mr. Augur felt that, statistically speaking, shootings are too rare to calculate that. He did mention that all doors need to be locked and this would be more about preventing inappropriate entry.

Mrs. Neubig stated that the doors would be unlocked when students come in and staff would be there greeting them. Once the last bus comes through, the doors would be locked. Mr. Hicks asked if other personnel costs would be involved with this and Mrs. Neubig stated that everything could be automated. She described the capabilities of the automated kiosks. Mr. Hicks asked how the District stops people from letting the people behind them in.

Mr. Yamartino commented that none of this would have stopped the student at Columbine and metal detectors were mentioned as a way to deter that. Mr. Hicks brought up the fact that students let people in other doors at the schools. Mr. Moore commented that every student thanked him for being at the door this morning.

Mrs. Neubig has estimated costs and she will share them with the Board. Mr. Moore summarized that there are a few weeks before the budget is done, so they can still be implemented next year. Dr. Veronesi will be speaking with Laura Francis about sharing the costs of a trooper who could act as a resource officer as well.

### **Strategic Visioning Update**

Mr. Moore reported that Dr. Veronesi has been having meetings with the staff to explore how they would like to see the schools in the future. The first meeting was with just staff and the second meeting included some parents. The main issues were space, including going outside; time and schedule, including having their own time during the day; stability of curriculum and testing; technology, including STEAM; multi-age contact between both students and adults; the HOT school; and transitions and building leadership. There were also comments about diversity and multicultural options, how to connect the community to the world and characterizing student-centric learning.

There will be another public meeting somewhere around the March 28<sup>th</sup> time period. Dr. Taylor asked if there were minutes from the meetings and Mr. Moore stated that notes were taken. Mr. Augur noted that this was an internal staff meeting with the public invited to participate at every other meeting.

Melissa Booth stated that the meeting was not what she had expected because she thought the discussion would be more about programming and it was just hopes and dreams of the students and the staff. She did feel that 3:15 was too early in the afternoon, but the meeting was videotaped.

Dr. Taylor asked what the time line is for strategic visioning and what product will come out of it, specifically related to options. Mr. Yamartino agreed that it seems to be moving slowly and wondered if it was fair to ask everyone to make that type of decision in May. Mr. Augur explained that there would be two years to create the program and hoped that they would get that input through the survey.

Mr. Moore felt that if the structural decision happens quickly, this would have to then blend itself into the structure that is created. Dr. Taylor wondered what happens if what is dictated by structure is not what people anticipated or wanted programmatically. Dr. Taylor had thought that both ideas would be available at the same time. Mr. Moore stated that there are two meetings scheduled in March and a recommendation could come forth in early April. The hope was that there could be a high-level framework available.

Mr. Augur asked if Dr. Veronesi could provide an update at the next full Board meeting.

**Public Comment**

Jim Irish offered the use of the name capital costs for the line on the draft and estimated yearly savings for the footnote rather than net. On the survey, Mr. Irish asked who would be receiving the survey and Dr. Taylor stated that everybody in both towns would receive it.

Melissa Booth asked about mentioning Korn School on the survey and Mr. Moore stated that there is still no answer about whether still owning Korn would impact any grants. Dr. Friedrich thought that if there is ambiguity on the survey, the results will be difficult to interpret. Mrs. Booth felt that there are a lot of people in the two towns that care about only the costs and she has a problem with that. On option B, she felt that it looks like one classroom is costing \$1 million. She also feels that the District should spend the extra money and build something rather than use portables. As far as the strategic planning and vision of the program, it has always been two programs and she still has a problem with just one program. She also mentioned that if kindergarten goes to Memorial, new bathrooms would need to be installed. She also felt that the playground at Memorial would not be appropriate for that age group.

Another member of the public had the same comment about the cost of a classroom in option B and while he appreciates that Mr. Augur will explain it to him, he wondered about all of the other people who look at it. He also commented that it looks like the cost of portables is the same as the cost of construction and wondered why they would consider portables at all.

Carl Stoup asked about the footnotes on the survey.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First