

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Committee met in special session on Monday, July 2, 2018 at 6:30 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

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

Committee members absent: Mrs. Boyle

Other Board members present: Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Business Manager

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Augur made a motion to approve to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Hicks, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes - May 31, 2018

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes of May 31, 2018, as presented.

Mr. Augur asked that Sarah Jane Daley be corrected to Sarah Jane Bailey on the first page. Dr. Veronesi will verify her name.

In favor of approving the minutes of May 31, 2018, as amended: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.

Korn School Building Update

Dr. Veronesi reported that she had asked Laura Francis to attend tonight's meeting but she was out of state. The feasibility study is on track with the first public meeting scheduled for the end of July. They are planning on a December 4th referendum.

Safety and Security Update

Dr. Veronesi thought that this item should be a standing item on the agenda. She informed the Committee that they still do not have an MOU for the SRO from the State Police. They have reached out daily, but have no information.

Mrs. Neubig was able to get another quote on the 3M film from a 3M dealer in Waterford, New York which was about \$39,000 more than the original quote. Mrs. Neubig also reminded the Committee that demand is exceeding supply for this item and no one is sure when the material will be available.

Dr. Taylor asked if the MOU for the SRO will delay the timing and implementation into the school year and Dr. Veronesi felt that it might. She also felt that the Board will want to review the MOU very carefully before signing off on it. She understands that if there is a trooper available with SRO training, they could be hired within a month. Dr. Veronesi would like all of the Board members present at the meeting when the MOU is reviewed and felt that it would be unlikely to start the school year with an SRO.

Dr. Taylor also felt that the timeline wasn't clear about other decisions that need to be made as well. Mr. Augur reminded everyone that they had received a quote from Silver Petrucelli for reviewing the entryway hardening (\$500 per school) and Mr. Augur would like physical hardening done at the same time as an SRO. Dr. Taylor mentioned the interior hardening that the committee had also talked about. Mrs. Neubig explained that the \$500 per school was just vestibules and office alterations, not an overall security consult.

Mr. Augur made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, to authorize the administration to move forward with Silver Petrucelli to get the cost estimates of the full hardening of the vestibules.

Dr. Veronesi asked where the Committee stands on the window film and Dr. Taylor explained that he does not feel informed enough on the value of the film. He would like to be able to ask questions of a representative of the company. Mr. Augur felt that because he can easily get into any of the buildings just by following someone in, the value of the film is immediately degraded and he would be more interested in vestibules and is disinclined to vote for film.

Dr. Veronesi explained that Homeland Security stated that they would not come to talk about a specific product. Mr. Hicks did some research and talked with some people at ACES. They have some buildings that are filmed and some that are not. Their Director of Operations had a DVD that he would share with the Board and Mr. Hicks will try to get hold of that.

Mr. Augur explained that he would be for film in the long-term, but questioned the order in which the projects should be done. Mr. Yamartino felt that to spend tens of thousands of dollars to harden a vestibule and still allow someone to throw a brick through a window made no sense. He also felt that the windows could be done before the quotes and capital are available for the vestibules. Mr. Augur agreed, but would want all of the information before making a decision on any one piece.

Mrs. Petrella asked if Homeland Security prioritized any areas and Dr. Veronesi stated that they suggesting hardening the entries, using window film, upgrading surveillance, having appropriate signage, practicing protocols using incident management training and having environmental awareness, but not in any particular order. Dr. Veronesi also mentioned that she felt it was important to look at what kind of support is available for students in terms of social/emotional learning and mental health support which they are doing.

Dr. Friedrich suggested that though the committee may want to act on both issues at the same time, if information is available on one before the other, they should go for it. Dr. Veronesi also reminded the committee that Tom Lennart had suggested hiring a security consultant and Dr. Friedrich stated that he

would be very much in favor of that for both exterior and interior hardening. Mr. Yamartino asked about the advice that the State Police had given when the district allowed them to use the schools and whether a security consultant would actually say anything different from what has already been said. Dr. Friedrich asked if the State Police had specifically addressed the physical plant and Dr. Veronesi stated that they did not do a district-wide safety audit. Dr. Veronesi agreed that a security consultant may have nothing new to add, but may prioritize the options for the district. Mr. Yamartino suggested they use their relationship with the State Police for help on this.

Dr. Veronesi also felt that hardening the entryways will be a very costly endeavor. Mr. Augur understood and also felt that applying film on interior glass would not be a bad idea. Mr. Roraback commented that there was window film in a building that he worked in, but it was billed as an energy-saving product. Now, they have latched the safety tag on it. Mr. Roraback also stated that identification of locations with signage should be the highest priority for first responders.

Dr. Taylor summarized that the Board will vote on the Silver Petrucelli quote at the August 8th meeting, but Mr. Augur didn't feel that the full Board needed to vote on that. Mr. Hicks felt that it needed to be moved forward to the full Board. Mr. Augur asked to have a policy drafted to assign a threshold to spending, but Mr. Hicks stated that would have to wait until September as there will only be one item on the August agenda.

In favor of moving the authorization of the administration to move forward with Silver Petrucelli to get the cost estimates of the full hardening of the vestibules to the full Board: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Augur asked if the window film vendor would be willing to measure and quote on any internal window that would allow easy access and Mrs. Neubig will contact them. Mrs. Neubig also reported that the exterior signage at Cuginchaug and Central Office has been installed and all the doors are labeled. Mr. Francis is working with first responders to see how they would like windows labeled at all of the schools. Mrs. Neubig explained that the signage at the other schools would need to be part of the \$400,000 allocated to safety and security. Buzzers and camera upgrades were voted on district-wide and are occurring now.

Review of Survey Results

Dr. Veronesi reported that community members have asked what the Board will be doing with the feedback that was received from the survey and if there will be a follow-up survey.

Dr. Taylor felt that the best piece of information was that the survey effectively did away with Option B, the eighth grade in the high school. He felt it was clear that there was a large division within the towns about the different options; however it was less clear exactly how deep that division is. Dr. Taylor does feel that a follow-up survey is needed, with just two options and cost figures associated with those as well as program plans. He would like to see that happen sometime in September. Mr. Augur agreed that the follow-up survey should be done soon.

Dr. Taylor felt comfortable with the numbers provided by Silver Petrucelli for the two options, but would need the building and program component. Mr. Augur felt that Utilization did not need to be bogged down in that and commented that if there were two programs, transportation would be increased. Dr. Taylor felt that the public did not want to make a decision on the options unless they know what fits into

those options and that the committee would be remiss to go with just building configurations on the second survey without a clear plan within those building configurations.

Mr. Augur asked if Strategic Visioning would be done this fall and Dr. Veronesi explained that, within the context of the timeline, they have talked with the Center for School Change about having two community engagement sessions. She reviewed what would be included in these sessions and explained that there would be breakout groups in those sessions. Dr. Veronesi felt that the District may possibly want to have a referendum at the same time that the Town of Durham has theirs in December. That referendum would have to be noticed at least 30 days prior with explicit details.

Dr. Veronesi also mentioned that they may not need to have two community engagement sessions and also felt that the bottom line of the project may change with some possible alternatives. She gave examples of outdoor learning spaces, including courtyards, and the expansion of some interior spaces as well as the use of different furniture. It was also generally believed that it would not be a good idea to have a referendum on the same day as the Town of Durham. Mr. Yamartino felt that the taxpayers in Durham may have a problem with the cost of holding two different referendums. Mr. Augur mentioned that a vote on the same day may bring out more Durham voters than Middlefield voters.

Mr. Augur and Dr. Taylor both felt that this may not be the right time to design courtyards and do other things and that the project should be kept as minimal as possible. Dr. Veronesi felt that they were looking to come out with the most reasonable first step. She also pointed out that there will be significant savings from closing Lyman School. Mr. Augur hoped that Middlefield will figure out a solid recommendation to help move that along.

Mr. Yamartino explained that the Town of Middlefield is pretty committed to the fact that they do not want the building for town use and it is currently zoned residential. Changes to zoning may be required to get the best use of the property and if it is converted to residential use, there are other considerations, such as septic. Mr. Augur also reported that Ed Bailey has never responded to his request and Mr. Yamartino said that Mr. Bailey will give Mr. Augur a call.

Mrs. Petrella stated that people feel that if the economy continues to get better, people will start coming back in and there may be a need for a new school at a much higher cost.

It was then agreed to hold one community engagement session, not two, due to the time constraints. Dr. Veronesi explained that they would also need a District meeting and a public hearing before the referendum.

Review of Community Newsletter

Dr. Veronesi reported that Mr. Moore would like to have more information in the newsletter, including highlights of the district, but this newsletter will be utilization information only. There will be an overview from Mr. Moore, the upcoming Utilization Committee meeting dates, an overview of the community engagement session including a way to RSVP, a review of Korn School savings, a survey summary, district enrollment history and projections, projected timeline and a summary of the strategic visioning process to date.

Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. Neubig have reviewed the timelines and they feel like there should be a week-to-week timeline right now. Based on the meeting with the state, it was suggested that the EDO49 be

submitted in January. Dr. Friedrich felt that they should not rush and that while some money may be lost, the most important thing is to make the right choice. Mrs. Petrella agreed that the timeline could be planned around getting the application submitted in January, but there would be no reason why they could not delay if necessary. Dr. Taylor felt that the problem with not selecting a particular date is that more issues will continue to come up, though Dr. Friedrich felt that they cannot afford to compromise.

Mr. Augur agreed that they did not need to commit to filing an application in January; however he does believe that there should be a timeline that allows that to happen if the Board chooses to push forward at that point. Dr. Friedrich asked if they were comfortable with just one community meeting and Dr. Veronesi felt that they were, especially because there will be a district meeting and a public hearing.

Dr. Taylor felt that they were very close as far as the building configuration, but wondered if this would be enough time for Dr. Veronesi on the strategic visioning. Dr. Veronesi had intended to make a formal report to the Board in November, but that would be too late to notice a referendum. She does feel that the final report could be done by that time, but does feel that a recommendation needs to be made in October. Dr. Veronesi feels that the community engagement meeting will have to be slightly restructured. Everyone on the Strategic Visioning committee also felt that student focus groups were necessary and are planned for September. If that happens, followed by the community engagement session, Dr. Veronesi can make a recommendation to the Board in October.

Mr. Yamartino asked how they were envisioning the referendum and whether it would be an all or nothing referendum, including the school closing and the strategic visioning for curriculum. Dr. Taylor agreed that the language would be important. Dr. Veronesi reminded everyone that there was no referendum question about closing Korn School and she believes that the referendum question should be the scope of the project.

Dr. Taylor asked if there was anything to preclude the district from putting the available options on the referendum itself which would allow the public to make the choice about the options. Mr. Hicks explained that the question on the referendum has to be very specific and is usually a yes or no answer.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that the intention of the survey was to be informed by the public and the intention of the community engagement session is to get questions and comments and be informed.

Dr. Friedrich wondered about Option D, with two K-5 schools, which may be two different programs or used as neighborhood schools, and felt that they did not need to necessarily make a program choice with that option. If Option A was chosen, could parts of the ID program be run in the same building with the contemporary program? He wondered why the question of programs needed to be included in the options at all. Dr. Taylor felt it needed to be because people can choose to have things remain as they are and it was generally agreed that the question needed to have a guarantee about the program.

Dr. Veronesi agreed that people want to know if program choice will still be available in the two K-5 schools and how those programs will look. Mr. Yamartino agreed that if Option A is chosen, the program needs to be identified. He also explained that there is always the option to create a different program, even with the buildings as they are today.

Dr. Taylor pointed out that the two elementary schools are Schools of Distinction and scores are at the top of the pack, but scores decline in the fourth through sixth grade level. Dr. Veronesi didn't believe that program choice is the variable that has significant negative impact on student achievement. Mr.

Yamartino believes that the most difficult thing to overcome is the emotional investment that parents make. Mr. Augur felt that choice creates a “we” and a “they” and becomes very tribal.

Utilization Timeline

Dr. Veronesi felt that the survey should be sent out after the community engagement session and Mr. Augur asked if the survey would be altered because of the session. He thought the survey could possibly be handed out as people are leaving the session.

Dr. Friedrich asked what timeline would be presented in the newsletter and Dr. Veronesi felt that maybe they should not be as explicit and will just suggest a general timeline.

Mr. Augur spoke about the mobile responsive aspects of the website and felt that either the main website needs to be redesigned or a mobile-specific site needs to be designed. He felt that a mobile-specific site would be best. Dr. Veronesi spoke with Ken Pietrasko about that and he will get back to her with a cost. Mr. Yamartino asked that it be specific for a phone, not a tablet.

Public Comment

Carl Stoup thought it wasn't a bad idea not to have the referendum at the same time as Durham's. He agrees that time is drawing nigh and it will be very easy to push it back.

Adjournment

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First