

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, April 19, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut. Board members present: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Russell, Interim Business Manager.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Comment**

None.

**District Meeting - May 1, 2017 at 8:00 PM in the Auditorium at Coginchaug Regional High School****Next Board Meeting - May 10, 2017 in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School****Approval of Agenda**

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Flanagan, to approve the agenda as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes - March 27, 2017**

Dr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Flanagan, to approve the minutes of March 27, 2017, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.

**CRHS Music Department Recognitions: Erin Schilling and Tim Fisher**

Mr. Moore invited Ms. Schilling and Mr. Fisher to come up and be recognized for several things, including the play, Guys and Dolls, which was an incredible performance. Mr. Moore also mentioned that they won the competition in Virginia Beach and expressed that the school and the students are proud.

Ms. Schilling explained that she directs the choirs at Coginchaug and Strong. This is her 13<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, spending the past 12 years in Greenwich Public Schools. Mr. Fisher explained that he taught for 10 years at Memorial Middle School and started out halftime in District 13 and halftime in District 17. This is their first year at Coginchaug.

Ms. Schilling commented that over 80 students were involved in Guys and Dolls and lights and sound were also completely student-run. The entire orchestra pit was also all students, with very challenging music. Ms. Schilling also mentioned that the plan is to do a full high school musical every year. Three days after the play, they headed to Virginia Beach.

Mr. Fisher showed a slide show from the Virginia Beach trip and gave the Board an overview of the trip. Chamber Choir competed for the first time this year and they got an excellent rating and placed third in the competition. Concert Choir also got an excellent rating and placed third. Jazz Band got a superior rating and placed third. The Concert Band, with 92 members present, got a superior rating and placed first in Class A as well as best overall Concert Band of the entire festival.

Mr. Fisher and Ms. Schilling also commented that the students really represented the district well, not just in the competition, but overall. Mr. Fisher closed by reporting that the Concert Band and Concert Choir will hold a concern on May 18<sup>th</sup>, when they will honor all of the seniors. Ms. Schilling also reported that there will be a district choral night next Thursday, which will include over 400 students from fifth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Mr. Fisher also explained that this opportunity is for every student who wants to attend and they do not hold auditions. He also commented that there are 110 students in band and that a handful of students didn't come on the trip because there was a foreign language trip at the same time. Ms. Schilling stated that there are 65 students in choir and 41 came on the trip.

Dr. Veronesi also commented on the high performers that are involved in the music program and that there are things to be learned from that that can be applied to academics.

### **Communications**

Mr. Moore reported that the Harlem Wizards played here last night and Dr. Veronesi participated in the game.

Mr. Moore also commented that two ninth grade girls won a national hockey championship in Michigan.

Dr. Veronesi also mentioned that she and Mr. Moore had received an email from Bob Yamartino, Chairman of the Middlefield Board of Finance that endorsed the Board of Education budget to the citizens of Middlefield. Mr. Yamartino stated that the Board of Finance discussed the school budget and they were unanimous in their support of the school budget, primarily due to the openness and communication that was involved in this year's process.

Mr. Yamartino also stated that he had received communication from a paraprofessional in the District who had a concern about getting paid during vacation periods. This does cause some distress among the paraprofessional. Dr. Veronesi stated that she will follow up with the union presidents tomorrow.

Mr. Hicks thanked the members of the Board for putting the final touches on the budget.

### **Business Manager's Report**

Mr. Russell stated that there hasn't been much change in the budget since last month, but he thought the Board might want to see the Capital Reserve fund. The yellow items are the items that have changed since the last report on the Capital Reserve fund. There had originally been \$189,500 that was going into next year's budget, but that was reduced by \$25,000. The blue represents projects that are done with money still remaining. The red represents finished projects that were over-expended. Mr. Russell's recommendation is that the District take the funds from the blue projects to cover the red projects, even though it will still be short and funds would need to come out of the maintenance account.

Mr. Yamartino asked about the Security Grant which is a negative \$22,000. Mr. Russell had forgotten to take the note out about expecting \$13,000 which has been received. Mr. Yamartino asked what the total amount was for the Security Grant, but no one seemed to know as it started a long time ago. Mr. Russell thought that it would have been close to \$100,000. Mr. Yamartino would like to know how that overrun happened and Mr. Russell will look into it and report back.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Veronesi reported that the District meeting on May 1, 2017 starts at 8:00 PM in the Auditorium. An Executive Session will probably be scheduled for 7:00 PM in order to continue the discussions with the Town of Durham regarding Korn School. She also mentioned that, after reviewing the TEMS contract, the Board would have to vote a year ahead of time to discontinue the partnership with TEMS in order to discontinue the District's responsibility to provide transportation.

Mr. Hicks reviewed the partnership agreement and felt that there was not a lot in it that benefits the District. If the District were to pull out of the partnership, there would be virtually no effect on the District. We would still be obligated to send students to TEMS as any other magnet school. The decision to pull out of the partnership agreement would need to be made before June 30<sup>th</sup>. The way it is currently set up, Meriden and Middletown can override anything that happens due to the number of votes they have. Mr. Hicks would have no trouble with the District withdrawing from the partnership agreement.

Dr. Veronesi explained that it would be a potential savings of over \$30,000 in transportation costs and thought that the Board could officially vote on that in May.

Dr. Veronesi also pointed out that the amount that will be sent to referendum is \$327 less than what was voted on at the last Board meeting. This is due to the tech department budget reduction of \$18,720. When various items were deducted from the Tech budget, it totaled \$327 more than was expected.

Dr. Veronesi also reported that East Haddam has decided to join with Coginchaug for football. They have 12 players interested at a cost of \$650 per athlete, bringing the District \$7,800. An application has been sent to CIAC and the Pequot League has already given their approval. The CIAC approval is the final step in the process.

She also reported that she and Mr. Russell met with the financial advisors from IBIC to talk to them about potential financing, including the field house and potential renovations. They have been invited to the ERC meeting which will be held on May 10, 2017 at 6:00 PM.

### **Human Resource and Personnel Update - Maryellen Manning, Director of Organizational Development**

Ms. Manning focused on an update of where the District is on professional learning and human capital. The goal is to become coherent and not fragmented, being able to support and grow the staff.

Ms. Manning explained that they are focusing on academic content and remain forward-thinking, innovative and inspiring. In the fall, Ms. Manning had reviewed the professional learning standards and

explained that they have made an effort to maintain those standards. Online registration has been implemented as well as evaluations. These evaluations are shared with everyone in the District.

The areas of focus can be broken down into middle and high school and elementary school. The middle and high school focus was on data and instructional strategies. Rooms have been reconfigured to be different learning structures that are more engaging. Outside consultants were brought in to work on content-specific instructional strategies and follow up has happened through Google Classroom.

At the elementary level, the focus was more pragmatic, including Teachers' College Reading and Writing Workshop. There was an overview at the beginning of the year and then further professional learning was provided. Ms. Manning explained that there was now a Literacy Team, including instructional coaches and interventionists. This same format of bringing in a coach and having a team will also be done next year for math.

Ms. Manning commented that the training is ongoing. She explained that there is a five-year plan for science that is also being worked on with a consultant. A consultant also came in this year regarding early childhood and there was also a Regional Health Summit that hopefully will be held every year.

Moving on to human capital, Ms. Manning explained that the Region has committed to invest in human capital to enhance human development. One thing that has been done worked on since August was to update job descriptions. Ms. Manning distributed a new Welcome Packet that will be given to new employees. They have also been working on how to find new talent and have created interview evaluation sheets. They now have a record of telephone reference checks. A new Hiring Protocol has also been created.

Ms. Manning went on to review new staff orientation which will now include a curriculum overview. There was also a Community Bus Tour which Sue Gaudreau spearheaded. Education Employer Verification is very time-consuming, with over 50 requests on former employees just this year so far. An I-9 review for all RSD 13 staff is constantly being updated and a file review for certification and health requirements is done.

The HR handbook, or landing page, is being developed and will hopefully launch by this time next year. Ms. Manning will also do a survey with regard to communication and human capital needs. Ms. Manning reiterated that she feels very lucky to be here in the District and working with the team.

A question was asked about exit interviews and Ms. Manning explained that it would be an easy thing to do and they will be doing that.

Mrs. Boyle thought Ms. Manning has done a great job and appreciates the packet. Dr. Veronesi commented on the efficiency in Central Office now.

## **Committee Reports**

### **A. Student Achievement**

Mrs. Flanagan reported that the Student Achievement committee met on Monday and discussed the interview process for the upcoming hiring of a curriculum director. They also reviewed the three-year strategic plan for mathematics improvement. It is believed that students can perform much better than

what is being seen and the Committee wants to make sure that every student is being challenged. The first step is to follow through on the plan of cohesive and alignment with a three-year plan, then breaking that down into details and implementation plans.

Dr. Veronesi gave the Committee's feedback, as well as her own perceptions, to Dr. Berry. Mrs. Flanagan felt that the struggle with math is not unique to District 13 and is something that will be an ongoing battle. She does feel that the District is heading in the right direction.

The Committee also talked about NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) that will be implemented this fall. Dr. Veronesi felt that the Board's support of a science specialist has made a huge difference. Dr. Veronesi summarized that the next-gen science standards are almost like the Common Core for science and means that what teachers are teaching and how they are teaching it is changing. The testing will also be changing. Discussion continued on how science education has changed over the years as well as how the classrooms have changed. The Board also had a discussion about the furniture and how it is arranged and rearranged.

Mrs. Flanagan also reported that the Committee reviewed SBAC updates and assessment. Mrs. Flanagan felt that the District needs to be able to find out how to get better in what areas and what is meaningful. The Committee didn't really understand the goals and how they are reached. Dr. Veronesi has reached out to a retired curriculum director for advice on how to share data with the Board of Education. Dr. Taylor felt that it was difficult to interpret the data, but did see a signal between third grade at Brewster and Lyman. He thought it would be nice to have data presented to the Board at different levels. Dr. Veronesi agreed that the data could be presented in many ways and explained that they analyze the data down to the individual child. Dr. Taylor felt it would be nice to know the stories that come out of that data.

Mrs. Boyle felt that the Board needs to look at the information from a higher level and doesn't need to get down to the individual child or teacher. Dr. Taylor felt that it would be nice to know how any issues have been addressed by the administration. Mrs. Flanagan felt that it was the Board's responsibility to provide resources in order to impact student achievement and that it is an ongoing challenge to understand the Board's needs. Dr. Taylor would love to hear some qualitative things. Dr. Veronesi agreed that she would like the Board to understand how decisions are made to allocate resources. She also hoped to come to an agreement this summer as to what the Board is really looking for from data.

Mr. Yamartino asked Dr. Veronesi what the key metrics would be for grading individual students and she felt that it would be growth over time and performance relative to the benchmark. She would also like to look at how a cohort of children progress and change over time from grade to grade. Mr. Moore would like to see comparisons to other schools in the DRG.

Mrs. Flanagan also commented that SBAC testing will be underway next week, starting at Brewster, and will finish at Brewster and Lyman in the second week of May and at Memorial in the third week of May. Strong starts next week and finishes on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Results should be available in the fall.

Mrs. Flanagan reported that they also discussed AP classes and the important take away from that was that the District opted to not be overly restrictive on who can participate in AP classes and that, whether they pass the test or not, it is probably a good experience for the students. The Committee agreed that the percentage of students who pass the test is not that meaningful. Mrs. Boyle asked if students can be

enrolled in college classes during high school. A parent had shared an article with her from Florida where they have dual enrollment. Dr. Veronesi will check and report back.

### **New Business**

#### **A. Before and After School Update**

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that they had wanted to address questions and concerns, particularly regarding supporting kids who receive special education and being sensitive to other businesses in the community that may be offering before and after care. Dr. Veronesi reviewed why she thought the program would be a viable one and stated that she had no desire to put anybody out of business.

Dr. Veronesi stated that she has spoken to Mrs. Emory about the population requiring support and they felt that they could accommodate the needs of the existing District students with highly-trained staff. Dr. Veronesi is not concerned about this issue having a financial impact.

In terms of the competition issue, Dr. Veronesi stressed that it is very important to her to work in collaboration at every level and had originally approached BASREP about partnering in the transition. A question had come up from the two Park & Rec departments and Dr. Veronesi reiterated that they have always wanted to partner with those groups and are not interested in being in competition with anyone. She also explained that the program in the District would not take infants and toddlers.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that a program already exists in the District and the survey produced interest from 130 people. She would like to hold parent information sessions in the next few weeks and report back to the Board for them to vote on in May.

Dr. Veronesi reported that Mr. Renninghoff had mentioned the increase in minimum wage and she stated that the interns will generally be students who can be paid 85 percent of minimum wage as long as they only work 20 hours. An adjustment has been made in the proposal. They also looked at reducing some of the staffing costs by staggering staff. They also know that staffing can be adjusted, depending on enrollment. She also mentioned that any revenue from the drop-in option was not included in the proposal.

Dr. Veronesi also reported that they have looked at several other programs and they range from breaking even in East Hartford, \$9,000 in North Branford which seems to be most similar to our district and up to \$145,000 profit for Farmington. Mr. Russell spoke with the business office in North Branford and was told they would make about \$10,000 this year, but they have been running about a \$20,000 surplus for several years. North Branford also receives an FRC grant which impacts revenues. Kevin Brough reported that revenue in North Branford was \$335,699.56, with expenditures of \$326,513. They have approximately 178 children enrolled, on a varying schedule.

Dr. Veronesi also talked about the record keeping for the program and stated that she has no concerns about that. Mr. Russell stated that the program is relatively small in relation to everything that's done in the business office.

Mr. Moore felt that the biggest concern would be that the District would be in competition with the private providers and asked Dr. Veronesi to look at what that competition actually consists of. Dr.

Friedrich also asked where the children of the parents who are seriously interested in the program are now.

Mrs. Boyle worries whether this is the right year to start the program. She felt it would tax the District's resources and hurt local businesses. She would not be in favor of the program at all and would not want to tease the parents with the idea. Mrs. Boyle also felt that it should have been part of the budget discussion. She felt that the competition is also in-home daycare and high school kids who babysit after school. Mrs. Boyle felt it was the Board's job to be prudent and financially responsible and the time is not right to start this program. Mr. Renninghoff echoed Mrs. Boyle's thoughts.

Dr. Veronesi felt that the program would not prohibit anyone from bringing their child to a home daycare. Dr. Veronesi is always trying to think of ways to make the District more attractive to families and she believes this program is one way to do that.

Dr. Taylor was also concerned about using the District's resources and he would like to see this as a completely separate entity from a financial standpoint. He does believe it is a wonderful idea from an educational standpoint and it has a lot of public interest.

Mr. Augur agreed with Dr. Taylor's concerns about the District's resources and is also concerned about competition with the businesses. Mr. Augur also pointed out that the District would be losing the \$10,000 rent that BASREP was paying. Mr. Augur did not feel the program should be promoted as he also did not feel it would be supported on the Board.

Mr. Renninghoff felt that parents would be going with the lower cost option and home daycares and other businesses would suffer. He also did not feel that this is a primary function of the school district. Mr. Renninghoff is not in favor of the program and would like to see it decided tonight.

Mrs. Petrella felt that the bottom line of the proposed program drops even more when you account for the income from BASREP that will not be received. She also felt that what would make the district attractive is what happens during the school day. Mrs. Petrella did not feel comfortable with the District taking on another whole program which she believes to be outside of education.

Dr. Veronesi did not feel that parents would be interested based on price. Dr. Veronesi also did not see this program as taking away from time resources or expertise from the academic program.

Mr. Yamartino asked if the District is able to turn away any students with special needs and Dr. Veronesi stated that the District has to accept all students. All children must be able to access programming, but before and after care is very different than the educational process. She reiterated that highly-trained staff in the program could support that. Dr. Veronesi confirmed that if a student comes in and requires a one-on-one, the District would be obligated to provide that.

Mr. Yamartino also asked about the projected surplus which he feels is pretty low from a contingency standpoint and would want to see a number higher than that. He commented that North Branford's program runs at about \$1,800 per student and the District is projecting \$3,300 per student. Mrs. Flanagan mentioned that volume leverages overhead costs and North Branford has considerably more students.

Dr. Taylor summarized that the question before the Board is do they feel that programming value is worth the small financial risk. He also felt that the numbers would be flexible. Dr. Taylor felt the Board's

responsibility is to the kids, their learning and their education. Mrs. Boyle felt the Board's responsibility is also to the taxpayers of the community.

Mrs. Flanagan also felt that anticipated administrative costs could be included to be more reflective of the true costs and felt that should be done if the program proposal moves forward.

Mr. Moore also mentioned that, since Korn is being closed, there is lost revenue anyway and there have been no discussions as of yet for BASREP to move to another school. He also reminded the Board that the District provides transportation to BASREP from the other schools and does not charge for that.

Mr. Hicks wondered if the District would really get bang for their buck out of this program. He too does not agree that parents would gravitate to the lowest price and he also does not agree that the Board's focus is on taxpayers and not on students. However, Mr. Hicks is just not convinced the District should get into this. Mr. Yamartino asked Mr. Hicks if ACES could come in and run a program like this in the District. Mr. Hicks thought they would be delighted to do that.

Mrs. Boyle made a motion, seconded by Mr. Renninghoff, to not move forward with the Before and After School Program.

Mrs. Boyle thanked Dr. Veronesi and Mr. Brough for the extensive work they did on this program.

In favor of approving the motion to not move further on the Before and After School program: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Hicks, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff and Mr. Yamartino. Against: Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.

Mr. Moore also reported that he has asked Mrs. Boyle to chair the Personnel Committee to perform Dr. Veronesi's evaluation. Mrs. Flanagan has also agreed to be on the committee and Mr. Moore asked if either Mr. Augur or Dr. Taylor would be willing to serve. Mrs. Boyle explained that the form will be mailed in May and will be talked about in Executive Session in May.

Mr. Moore also asked if the Board would like to recognize a student, whom the principal of Cuginchaug feels represents the core ethical values, at graduation. The Board generally agreed.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Anticipated Executive Session**

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Renninghoff, to move into Executive Session.

In favor of going into Executive Session: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.



In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First