

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, September 12, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Board members present: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Board members absent: Mr. Hicks

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

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Public Comment**

None.

**Administrator Welcome - Tom Ford**

Tom Ford was happy to report that the opening of the year at John Lyman School was successful with lots of smiling faces and happy children. He recognized the staff for all their work throughout the summer. He commented on the quality of this year's convocation, including the keynote speaker. Mr. Ford also thanked the Board for their continued support.

**Introduction of Regional School District 13 School Resource Officer Trooper Mark Hesseltine**

Dr. Veronesi introduced Trooper Hesseltine to the Board of Education and the public. They will go into detail on his daily and monthly schedule in October, but wanted everyone to be able to recognize him. He will have a weekly presence at each school organized around arrival, dismissal and lunch time. He will be present at fire drills and will do perimeter walks with administrators. Trooper Hesseltine will serve on the district's safety committee as well as student support committees at the high school and middle school. He will also teach classes at the high school and be a guest speaker in other classes as well as lead the DARE program for all sixth graders.

Trooper Hesseltine commented that the students have been great and he's looking forward to working with everyone. He has lived in town for about 15 years and has had two children go through the school system.

**CRHS Reporters - Timothy Arcari, Emily Dell'Orfano, Lindsey Marino**

Lindsey Marino reported that she is a part of student council, plays basketball and is part of the National Honor Society. She'd like to be an elementary school teacher and plans on attending college somewhere in New England. She is taking a variety of classes in her senior year, including forensics, oceanography, pre-calculus and crafts. She is also taking a field experience class, Career Explorations, which helps guide students in a direction for their future career. She will be shadowing a third/fourth grade teacher at John Lyman and feels that it has been a great experience.

Tim Arcari is a member of Spanish Honor Society, National Honor Society, student council, captain of the soccer and indoor track teams and is also a member of the track team. He has had a good experience with the Career Center class and Mr. Thompson does a phenomenal job helping the students. Tim will be doing a job shadow at Medtronics. He also feels it's very important to be on a sports team and the bonding, chemistry and collaboration is all important. He feels that one of the reasons Cuginchaug athletics are so great is that everybody on the team is so unified and strongly bonded. The soccer team has had a great start to their season though the record doesn't show it at 0-2. The football team has won their first game and the volleyball team is 2-0. Cross country always looks great.

Emily Dell'Orfano is a member of National Honor Society, EDGE, HERO and Spanish Honor Society. She also participates in Show Choir, Concert Choir, Chamber Choir and girls' a capella. The music department is preparing for the Durham Fair with the Shoreline Music Festival after that. She was excited to announce that this year's musical will be Beauty and the Beast which will be in the spring. They are also planning a trip to Disney this Spring where they will compete with schools from across the country. Jazz band will participate in the Berkeley Jazz Festival in the Spring. Emily also congratulated Mr. Fisher for winning Teacher of the Year.

**Approval of Minutes****A. Board of Education regular session meeting - August 8, 2018**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of August 8, 2018, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of August 8, 2018, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Mrs. Boyle abstained. Motion passed.*

**Next Board Meeting - October 10, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Cuginchaug Regional High School****Progress Towards Strategic Coherence Goals**

Dr. Veronesi welcomed the members of the public to the meeting. She explained that the goals are organized in three general areas: student achievement, well-being and engagement. She reported that the district has received the SBAC scores and will be sharing them with the Student Achievement Committee at their meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Student achievement goals will be organized around specific student learning outcomes in all grades. There are specific achievement goals for each grade level and also for individual classes. They are also looking at curriculum revisions, including the creation of new courses at the high school and enhancing instructional strategies. They continue to look at professional development and the use of instructional coaches to support student learning outcomes.

In the area of well-being, the district will move from exploration and inquiry toward implementation of specific research-based practices in the area of social emotional learning. The focus will continue on

mental health and well-being as well as safety and security. A next step will be looking at the vestibules in each of the schools and Silver Petrucelli will come out next week and have a proposal in the next several weeks. They are also working on the area of equity, exploring the impact of race and perspectives.

In the area of engagement, a communication plan was developed last year and will be implemented this year. Communication will be more clearly branded and there will be a predictable schedule, including communication from Central Office, the Board of Education and from the schools. Dr. Veronesi stated that another part of engagement is the work that the Board is doing specifically around utilization and making sure that the community is engaged and has the opportunity to provide feedback. Part of the work at the Board retreat will be for the Board to set their own goals and priorities that are linked to supporting the goals and priorities identified in the Strategic Coherence plan.

### **Board of Education Fall Retreat**

Mr. Moore stated that Dr. Taylor and Mr. Augur have both asked about putting together priorities for the next couple of years and it was decided to do that at the fall retreat.

It was agreed to hold the fall retreat on Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> as it is before the next Board meeting and everyone will have had a chance to look over the Student Achievement goals as well as the results of the survey from the Search Institute that look at students' stress, their connection with their parents and adults and substance use of opioids, marijuana, alcohol and cigarettes. Mr. Moore cited various other issues that will be discussed at the retreat.

### **Community Engagement Session Update**

Mr. Moore thanked Dr. Taylor, Mr. Augur and Dr. Veronesi for leading the discussion at the community engagement session last week. He also thanked the National Honor Society students who took all the notes. He also reported that he and Dr. Veronesi met with a group of students on Monday and found that their insight is probably one of the things that the general public should be hearing. He would like to get a meeting with the students talking and the parents listening. The students stated that they want to be together and not meet in ninth grade. One issue from the students who went through Brewster is that they want to have an opportunity to do more public speaking in earlier grades. They also recognized differences in outside learning and field trips between Brewster and Lyman.

Dr. Veronesi was most impressed that the National Honor Society students requested an opportunity to meet with her after the community engagement session because they wanted to share their perspective. All of the students want to make someone's life better and to improve the outcomes of their life. The Strategic Visioning committee is hoping to hold focus groups with as many students as possible in September.

Dr. Taylor felt that the community engagement session was a good way to get different viewpoints and the small group format worked well. Dr. Veronesi felt that parents wanted to know the decision so that they could decide if they liked it or not. All of the questions have been compiled and she will share them with the Utilization Committee. Dr. Veronesi also suggested another community newsletter in October to address those questions and report any progress.

Mrs. Boyle credited the Board for taking a step back and trying to do its due diligence. She was really disappointed that only 48 people registered from the community to attend the event. She felt that the Board is doing their part and would like the community to do theirs.

Mr. Moore explained that there is a 10-page summary of all the comments that was sent out to everyone who attended the session. Dr. Veronesi felt that there were good questions and good suggestions and it was very worthwhile.

Mrs. Petrella was also disappointed in the number of people who attended, but did feel that it was an excellent forum. She also hoped that another session could be held before the Board votes on this issue.

Mrs. Geraci reported that she had encouraged members of the public to attend the session and was asked when the decision will be made and what the important meetings will be. She suggested that the timeline and schedule of Board meetings be sent out again.

Mr. Moore stated that he has been in public service for 45 years and getting 48 people to a meeting is a big deal. He felt that the information is getting out, but may not be coming back.

Mrs. Boyle commented that Mr. Augur, Dr. Taylor and Dr. Veronesi have been doing incredible work on this. Mr. Yamartino echoed the thanks to the administrators and the students.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **A. Policy Committee - Second read - Community Member Committee Participation**

Mr. Yamartino read the Community Member Committee Participation policy into the record. Mr. Augur mentioned that the committee intended that the word “chair” be used as opposed to “chairman.”

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to adopt the Community Member Committee Participation policy, as amended.*

Mrs. Boyle felt it was great that the Board is being inclusive and involving the community wherever possible. Mr. Yamartino stated that he was very pleased with the policy and felt that Dr. Veronesi said it best when she said that this was the first policy that this Board of Education has adopted that speaks to one of the three primary tenets, engagement with the community.

*In favor of adopting the Community Member Committee Participation policy, as amended: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.*

### **Communications**

Mr. Moore reported that he met with Nick Faiella and Henry Bugai about the field house regarding their intentions to assist in the funding. Jon Brayshaw has come up with a Durham Fair-type structure at a cost of \$150,000. The Benchwarmers and the football association have indicated they would commit to assist in funding it over time. There was also discussion about having advertisements during events.

Mrs. Petrella received a letter from Ann Malcolm and she summarized it by stating she talked about the alternative education program that’s held in Middletown for some of our students and proposed a return of these students back to the school system.

### **Korn School Update**

Mr. Moore attended the town meeting last week and it is his understanding that a referendum will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup> for \$7 million for improvements to the building, including some operating costs. The primary cost is focused on upgrading the current systems (electricity, plumbing and heating) which are nearing the end of their life. There was a lot of discussion about what \$7 million looks like and it comes

out to \$78 per \$100,000 of assessed value per year for 20 years. There were discussions about the payment to Middlefield for the cost of the building and what the uses would be.

There will also be a referendum in Durham in November for repair of the culverts and another in January on the public safety complex for \$5 to \$7 million. They plan to hold three different referendums, with the net cost of all three referendums at \$178 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

The final comment made by Henry Coe was that Durham had started looking at a community center/senior center in 1986 and it is time that a decision is made. Mr. Moore felt that the final report from the committee will be out in the next two to three weeks.

Dr. Taylor asked that the Board vote on a contingency plan at the next meeting if the Korn School referendum fails. He feels that the general consensus coming out of the Utilization committee is to demolish the building if Durham votes it down, but the full Board should vote on that.

Dr. Veronesi reminded the Board that they had been anticipating to go to referendum on the school project in December because they had been encouraged to do so before January, however it has been decided to wait until closer to June due to the town referendum.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Veronesi felt that the opening this year was one of the smoothest ever, primarily dictated by the fact that the district has an exceptional staff and leadership team. Her message at convocation was the importance of connection. She also mentioned the book, "Big Potential", by Shawn Achor, and recommended it to all the Board members. Dr. Veronesi also thanked Cori DiMaggio for her hard work on professional development. The keynote speaker, Joe Markiewicz, talked about the importance of relationships and being there for each other.

The focus on equity is a priority that has been identified and work has begun on exploring issues around diversity and race. Dr. Veronesi has also been in constant communication with the superintendent from Middletown and they are exploring a possible school partnership. Mr. Moore reported that the equity work includes a recognition of differences and the needs of people in the minority populations and people of color. The first part was about how you feel about these differences and he believes the second part will be what you do about it. Mr. Moore felt that it was a very emotional day and was very worthwhile. The next session is on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Moore also reported that Tim Fisher was recognized as the Teacher of the Year at the convocation.

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

Mrs. Neubig began by explaining that the first two to three months of the school year can be high on the expenditure side. The first teacher payroll was in August and HSA deposits were front-loaded according to bargaining unit agreements. Purchased services included some yearly maintenance, the bus lease was in July and insurance was paid. Software licenses also needed to be renewed and books were ordered.

On the revenue side, preschool tuition is coming in as well as miscellaneous income (pay to participate and parking fees). MTA was budgeted for 18 students and flows in throughout the year. Many identified projects in capital reserve have been started or are completed. ADA issues in the auditorium are being worked on as well. The district did receive round three of the State Homeland Security grant of \$9,300 which was reimbursement for items already purchased.

New cameras and the buzzer systems have been completed at most locations, with Memorial scheduled for tomorrow and Brewster on Friday. The kitchens in all the schools have buzzers now which were

repurposed from other areas. Once the buzzers systems are complete, they will start work on the open door alarms at the high school.

For transportation, the routes are working out fine. Mrs. Neubig did mention that the buses are 10 years old and there were a couple of minor breakdowns in the past few weeks. She asked the Board to keep that in mind during the budget process. There were two accidents reported this week, one that had two students on the bus and one with no students. Neither had any injuries.

Repairs were made on the septic tank at Coginchaug (\$8,100 for cleaning, pumping and repairing). There has been a roof leak and they had to crack seal the tennis court (\$8,000). Air quality testing has been done and chillers have been repaired. Mrs. Boyle felt that the tennis courts were fairly new and that \$8,000 seems like a lot of money. Mrs. Neubig stated that they were not safe to play on, but the work has not been done as of yet. Dr. Taylor stated that it wasn't just a small crack and Mrs. Boyle asked if the district should go back to the contractor about it.

Mrs. Neubig has begun work on the budget calendar and had a draft to share with the Board. They are also upgrading the software and it has been a tedious process. She also noted that Tippi Popp has been phenomenal in this process. Dr. Veronesi felt that changes will be noticed in the manpower that is necessary to use this system.

### **Public Comment**

John Giammatteo, from Middlefield, thanked the Board for dinner at the community engagement session. He too was shocked to see 45 people and had expected to see many more. He did feel that the communication from the Board was clear about the meeting and how to register. He was put off by the steering of the committees at first, but realized that there was no other way to do it and it worked very well. His group varied in age, ideas and opinions yet he felt that it worked very well.

### **Executive Session**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor to move into executive session for a discussion of confidential attorney-client privileged communication regarding parent correspondence concerning student matters and invited Dr. Veronesi to join.*

*In favor of moving into Executive Session: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Adjournment**

*A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First