

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board members present: Ms. Betty (by phone), Mrs. Caramanello (by phone), Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy (arrived late) and Mr. Stone
Board members absent: None

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance, Mrs. Keane, Director of Student Services and Special Education, Mr. Brough, Human Resources Specialist, Mr. Pietrasko, Director of Infrastructure and Security Technology, Mrs. Quarato, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Accountability and Mrs. Siegel, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Accountability

Mrs. Petrella called the special meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mrs. Petrella congratulated Mr. Roraback and Mrs. Caramanello for being reelected to the board. She also extended her appreciation to all of the teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. She also thanked the community for their support of the budget and the teachers' union for their effort to get the vote out.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Mennone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Presentations and Recognitions

A. Brewster and Lyman Artist Share

Mrs. Dwyer, the art teacher at Brewster School, introduced four first-grade art ambassadors from Brewster who presented their bird sculpture projects. Mrs. Howes, the art teacher at Lyman, introduced four fourth-grade students from Lyman who presented their clay soap dispensers. The board was invited to the art shows at both schools. Mrs. Howes then noted that Mrs. Dwyer will be retiring this year and the art department will truly miss her. Mrs. Dwyer stated that it has been a pleasure, a privilege and an honor to serve District 13 for 36 years.

B. CRHS Reporters - Hayden Gonzales, Catherine Taylor and Christine Waterman

Hayden Gonzales reported that Spring sports are in full swing. Girls' outdoor track had a runner-up team finish at the Ellington Invitational and a first-place team finish at the Marty Roberts Invitational. Boys' outdoor track has two invitational wins at Ellington and Marty Roberts. The girls' co-op lacrosse team with Middletown has been an amazing opportunity and is 6-6 in their first season. The baseball team has had a good start to their season and are currently 4th in the Shoreline conference. The softball team has also had many wins and is currently ranked 5th in the Shoreline. The baseball and softball teams held a successful pancake breakfast this past weekend. Girls' and boys' tennis have both started the season

strong. The CRHS golf team had a successful trip to Florida. Several students have also been honored as scholar athletes. The Spring sports teams will be holding their senior nights in the next two weeks. Last Thursday, Coginchaug held a signing day for six athletes who signed to play a collegiate sport next year.

Catherine Taylor reported that a lot of final concerts will be happening in the Music department, including a Jazz Night on May 17th at 7:30, a concert at the Community Center on May 25th at 7:30, the Memorial Day parade and Concert Band and Concert Choir will hold their Spring concert on May 31st at 7:30.

Christine Waterman noted that many seniors have committed to colleges, several will be attending trade schools, two will be joining the military and five will be taking a gap year. This is spirit week, celebrating prom which will take place on Saturday at Aqua Turf. AP exams finish up this week and all virtual language students have started their final exams. Coginchaug's chapter of the National Honor Society will induct 22 new members on May 18th. This past month, Coginchaug was awarded all six places in the mixed media category of Hartford Healthcare's BrainDance Award.

C. CAPSS Superintendent/Student Recognition Award - Hayden Gonzales and Christine Waterman

Dr. Schuch explained that the Middlesex and Shoreline Superintendents Association recognizes two seniors based on recommendations from counselors and administrators. The seniors were all recognized at a luncheon at Water's Edge on April 24th. Christine Waterman was chosen because of her strong academic performance, impeccable character and commitment to school and community. She has an overall GPA of 4.36, while participating in a long list of extracurricular activities. Hayden Gonzales was selected because of his impressive academic performance, upstanding character and his dedication to school and community. He has an overall GPA of 4.67 and is a member of the National Honor Society and Latin Honor Society.

D. Financial Analysis of Long-Term Configuration Options - Ed Arum

Mrs. Neubig introduced Ed Arum, who has been a school business official and assistant superintendent for 32 years, retiring in 2005 and assisting districts since then. They had asked him to look at different scenarios of school reconfiguration.

Mr. Arum added that he lives in Torrington and is the co-chair of the building project in Torrington which is a new 7-12 school of 310,000 sq. ft. at a cost of \$179 million.

Mr. Arum reviewed that he looked at operating five schools with no change in operations, four schools, assuming Lyman closed, and three schools. There is no construction contained in these different scenarios.

Looking at the status quo, Mr. Arum had reviewed the current budget and added a 3.6 percent cumulative over 10, 15 and 20 years, which is actually 4.6 percent at year 20. Operating four schools would result in a savings of \$1.2 million yearly. He then showed the cumulative savings over 10, 15 and 20 years. Operating three schools would result in a \$2.4 million savings per year.

In 10 years, the total budget would be \$54 million if the district did nothing differently and \$76 million in 20 years. By operating four schools, there will be a savings of about \$1.6 million in the 10th year with a budget of about \$52 million. With three schools, the savings would be roughly \$3.4 million, for a total of about \$50 million. At 15 years, the total budget would be around \$64 million, with a \$2 million savings for four schools and a \$4 million savings for three schools. At 20 years, the total budget would be roughly \$76 million, with \$2.4 million savings for four schools and almost \$5 million savings for three schools. Mr. Arum explained that he used the medium enrollment numbers for his analysis.

With Lyman closing, the district would save nine positions, including principal, PE, music, library, one nurse, two administrative assistants and two custodians, or \$718,000 as of the current year. There would also be savings on electricity, fuel, repairs, landscaping, snow removal, health insurance and other items.

Closing two schools would reduce staffing by 18 people, two principals, two PE, two music, one art, one library, two nurses, four administrative assistants and four custodians, for a total of \$1.4 million by closing both schools. Along with other items, they would also save by reducing the number of buses by two.

Looking at capital needs, Silver Petrucelli had done a study at Lyman and found that it would cost \$6.6 million. There was a list of capital needs for Brewster as well that would cost about \$5.9 million.

Mr. Arum reviewed that if the district closed one school, the budget would be reduced by about 3.1 percent. Closing two schools would reduce the budget by 6.2 percent.

Mr. Arum explained that if they close two schools and expand Memorial, they may have to add an assistant principal, an additional nurse, two additional custodians as well as utilities, insurance and copiers. If two schools are closed and Memorial is expanded, the district could still save \$1.9 million in the first year. Mr. Arum explained that none of this includes debt service.

Mr. Arum then reviewed several charts and graphs showing the costs and savings. Mrs. Neubig added that the district will not see a savings in the first few years with the cost of construction at Memorial. She explained that the debt service shown is based on the \$70 million cost, borrowing 48 percent of that. Mr. Arum cautioned that the district not go over the allowable square footage or they will not get reimbursed.

Mr. Moore asked what the debt service would be in the sixth year out and Mrs. Neubig explained that, based on the proposed construction, it would be \$1.1 million in 2025/2026, \$2 million in 2026/2027, goes as high as \$3.5 million in 2029/2030 and then starts to decline. Mr. Moore felt that it was the earlier numbers that they need to sell as most people don't vote for 20 years from now. Mr. Arum mentioned that they used to have 35 percent of their eighth graders leave for other schools, with 350 kids going to a tech school, and this year there are only 257.

Mr. Roraback asked if Mr. Arum has seen growing pains going from smaller schools to one larger one and Mr. Arum felt that teachers are always leery of a big school, but the management of a school that size is the same as any other. He added that the kids will be able to build more relationships. Mrs. Neubig added that this presentation does not contain anything about preK. Dr. Darcy clarified that the numbers then do not include preK and Mrs. Keane explained that there are two preK classes at Brewster now and those numbers are included in the Brewster budget.

Mr. Arum added that he had asked O&G to do an analysis of the Silver Petrucelli proposal and found the numbers to be accurate. Mr. Roraback mentioned that he has heard that the percentage of property values being assessed may increase from 70 to 75 percent, which would mean more revenue for the towns.

Mrs. Neubig added that she will put Mr. Arum's presentation on the website tomorrow.

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt this is a good start, but does have concerns about preK as well. She isn't sure she would want to see preK at the high school. Mrs. Neubig explained that this was step one for the Building Committee to get numbers. She and Dr. Schuch have also met with another architect to see about other options. Dr. Schuch added that this architect has a different background than Silver Petrucelli. He felt that Silver Petrucelli's numbers came in way higher than he had thought and hoped they could get options that are as attractive educationally. They do hope to move forward with considering other options. Mrs. Petrella added that the board has yet to discuss other options and Dr. Schuch felt that the architect could help with that. He added that they have somewhat decided that meeting the June 30th deadline for this year is not feasible at this price point, but June 30, 2024 will be here before they know it.

Mrs. Neubig explained that O&G did a comparison to the second proposal from Silver Petrucelli and Dr. Schuch felt that the good news is they validated Silver's estimates, but the bad news is that it's still \$74 million.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if they had received an answer from Silver Petrucelli as to whether the renovations would be done with the kids still in session. Mrs. Neubig did not reach out to them, but Mr. Arum added that O&G's numbers do include that. He also offered to have O&G come to a board meeting.

Mr. Moore asked what types of options Dr. Schuch was looking for and he felt it would dovetail what they heard tonight. He thought it would be five schools as they have now, three schools as proposed by Silver Petrucelli or four schools that had been proposed three years ago. He felt that there may be merit in exploring other three-school and four-school options. Mr. Arum added that he felt they need to limit the options so that the community understands them.

Mrs. Petrella would like to see this move forward and asked if the board wanted to meet with the new architects. Dr. Schuch reminded them that they have not engaged the architect to do anything and didn't really feel it would be necessary. Mrs. Dahlheimer would love to have them talk to the full board, but would be willing to have a board representative meet with them. Mrs. Dahlheimer's concern would be options for preK.

Public Comment - at the beginning of the meeting public comment should refer to items on the agenda

A. In-person public comment

Maureen Funke, from Durham, thanked the teachers and acknowledged their hard work. As the district approaches the one-year anniversary of disbanding the Well-Being Committee, she reiterated the desire of many people in the community, teachers, students and parents of the importance of that committee. She strongly suggested that the Well-Being Committee be reinstated.

B. Remote public comment

Emma Quick, from Durham, commented that she heard a board member refer to the “misconception” of the differences between the Brewster-Memorial track and the Lyman-Memorial track. She sent an email to the board members and asked for solutions for the third graders at Memorial. She read her email into the record, basically stating that differences between the two tracks are quite often disputed and a disparity came to her attention about a field trip to the zoo. Her third grader mentioned a trip to the zoo, but she had heard nothing about it. The teacher informed her that they opted to bring experiences in this year, rather than doing an outside field trip. She did not feel that was the same as a field trip. She then learned that the Lyman third and fourth graders have a field trip to the Roger Williams Zoo. She asked how this was fair to this third-grade class and she did not feel that the experiences are even close to being equal. She is tired of hearing that the two tracks are the same. She asked who was in charge of planning and organizing field trips, who was in charge of approving field trips, why there wasn’t someone ensuring that all schools are planning equal opportunities and why there was no collaboration between the schools regarding field trips. When their family moved into town, she was told Lyman would be closing and did not consider it as an option. She now sees the clear disparities and wishes she made a different decision, but will not let her child suffer for that. She asked the board what they will do to make this right with just one month left of school and be sure it doesn’t happen again.

Patrick Holden, from Durham, believes that the Well-Being Committee was a vital part of the district and allowed students a platform to have their concerns addressed. He felt that the important issues of student well-being and school climate are drowned out at regular board meetings. There have been several instances over the last year that people in the community do not feel have been properly addressed. He is disheartened that he hasn’t heard much discussion at all. In the climate survey results, it was noted that 4 percent of students at Strong School did not feel safe and he felt that that number should be zero. They also received feedback that racially-charged issues are prevalent. He acknowledges that these conversations are difficult and that is exactly why the Well-Being Committee is needed.

Approval of Minutes

- A. Board of Education Regular Meeting/Retreat - January 21, 2023**
- B. Board of Education Special Meeting - February 2, 2023**
- C. Board of Education Special Meeting - March 23, 2023**
- D. Board of Education Special Meeting - March 1, 2023**
- E. Board of Education Regular Meeting - March 8, 2023**
- F. Board of Education Special Joint Meeting - March 16, 2023**
- G. Board of Education Regular Meeting - March 22, 2023**
- H. Board of Education Special Meeting - March 27, 2023**
- I. Board of Education Special Work Session - April 5, 2023**
- J. Board of Education Regular Meeting - April 5, 2023**
- K. Board of Education Public Hearing - April 5, 2023**

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stone, to approve the above-listed minutes, as presented.

In favor of approving the above-listed minutes, as presented: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report (if applicable)

Dr. Schuch also congratulated Mr. Roraback and Mrs. Caramanello for their reelection. He also thanked everyone involved in the budget process, including everyone who voted. He also thanked Mrs. Neubig for her leadership, expertise and wisdom in guiding everyone through the process. He is grateful that the successful referendum allows everyone to pause the intense focus on budget.

Dr. Schuch also thanked all of the teachers for their tireless efforts. There is a well-documented teacher shortage and Connecticut started the school year with 1,200 unfilled teaching positions and that trend is expected to escalate. Dr. Schuch is impressed with the district's commitment and support of the teachers and hopes that it can be sustained.

It was agreed to take a five-minute break at this point.

Staff Reports

A. Director of Finance Report - Kim Neubig

Mrs. Neubig reported that the general fund has been 77 percent expended and 84 percent of revenue has been received. She does expect to fully expend 100 percent of the budget this year, with no surplus. There were a lot of unanticipated expenses this year. MTA has been 51 percent expended, with 57 percent of revenue received. The general fund pays the health insurance for the MTA staff and the funds are transferred over in the month of June.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if there will be any reimbursement from Dattco for them not being able to meet their contract during the year. Mrs. Neubig explained that they are only charged for buses that roll out of the yard and she does not expect any reimbursement.

B. Climate Committee Update - Jen Keane

Mrs. Petrella asked about the 4 percent of students who feel unsafe and the racial issues. She would like Mrs. Keane to report on the Climate Committee's response to those issues at the next meeting. Mrs. Keane emphasized that the district wants 100 percent of the children to feel safe coming to school and will come back with that information next month.

Mrs. Keane also congratulated Mr. Roraback and Mrs. Caramanello on their reelection. She also gave a shout-out to the teachers. Mrs. Keane added that the district is at almost 100 percent staffing which is unheard of in the state.

Mrs. Keane reported that, year to date, there have been 408 office referrals and 164 bus referrals which have all been investigated and handled internally. There have been 68 out-of-school suspensions, with the majority of those at Strong and the high school. There have been 8.5 in-school suspensions and 1,822 unexcused absences. Of those absences, 71 of them are considered trancies (10 days in a year or four

days in a month unexcused). There have been five bullying complaints filed, with two of them substantiated. Mrs. Keane did note that she is concerned about the absenteeism and truancy, but noted that it could be as simple as a family taking a week's vacation and the child then having five sick days. Each of the truancy cases are investigated.

Mrs. Petrella asked for a full report on the climate survey next month and Mrs. Keane will have that available. Dr. Darcy asked how many students are represented in the 68 out-of-school suspensions and Mrs. Keane will provide that information as well. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked how many of the 71 truanancies have been identified as someone of concern. Mrs. Keane explained that they are all concerning as attendance is very important and noted that they are not medical absences. If the situation is reoccurring, they develop plans with the families. All parents are notified in writing if their child is reaching the truancy level. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that a lot of parents are having a hard time getting in to see a pediatrician and Mrs. Keane explained that they view those as excused absences.

Mrs. Keane added that absences across the country have been much higher during the pandemic and after. She felt that the district needs to keep a close look at that and continue to monitor it as well as offer support to students and families who are having a hard time. Dr. Schuch added that one of the things that would be of greater concern is a recurring pattern year-over-year. Research says that adolescents who are making the choice not to go to school have their attendance patterns begin at very young ages.

Mr. Moore asked if anyone has used the anonymous reporting form and Mrs. Keane stated that there have been 12 anonymous reports since last month and each of them have been addressed at the school level.

New Business

A. Vote on Healthy Food Initiative and Food Exemptions

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that the district participates in the National School Lunch program and, to get reimbursement for free or reduced lunches, they have to attest that they will not serve foods that are in direct competition or unhealthy foods and/or beverages. There are also exemptions as to when other foods can be served, i.e. a basketball game or a fund raiser.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to require participation in the healthy food option of HFC pursuant to CGS, section 10-21.5.f, the Board of Education of Regional School District 13 certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023 through June 20, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs and any fund-raising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if the district is out of compliance with any of this now and if it changes any offerings they currently have. Mrs. Neubig explained that it does not.

In favor of requiring participation in the healthy food option of HFC pursuant to CGS, section 10-21.5.f, the Board of Education of Regional School District 13 certifies that all food items offered for sale to

students in schools under its jurisdiction and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023 through June 20, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from the reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs and any fund-raising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, for combined food and beverage exemptions. The Board of Education of Regional School District 13 will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in section 10-221.q of the Connecticut General Statutes, provided that the following conditions are met: (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; (2) the sale is at the location of the event; (3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An event is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays and interscholastic debates are events, but soccer practices, play rehearsals and debate team meetings are not. Regular school day is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. Location means where the event is being held and must be at the same place as the food and beverage sales.

In favor of approving the motion for combined food and beverage exemptions. The Board of Education of Regional School District 13 will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in section 10-221.q of the Connecticut General Statutes, provided that the following conditions are met: (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; (2) the sale is at the location of the event; (3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An event is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays and interscholastic debates are events, but soccer practices, play rehearsals and debate team meetings are not. Regular school day is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. Location means where the event is being held and must be at the same place as the food and beverage sales: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

B. Vote to accept Nurses' Bargaining Agreement July 2023-2024

Mrs. Petrella noted that the board members have all received a summary of the settlement. Dr. Schuch explained that the agenda is incorrect as it is a three-year agreement and goes through June 2026.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the Nurses' Bargaining Agreement from July 2023 to June 2026.

Mrs. Petrella felt that the agreement is very fair and they were good negotiations.

In favor of approving the motion to approve the Nurses' Bargaining Agreement from July 2023 to June 2026: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

C. Vote to award Pickett Lane paving bid

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to award the RFP 2023-04 for design and construction services for a stabilized, full-depth reclamation (SFDR) of Pickett Lane to Indus in the amount of \$274,740.

Mr. Moore explained that there will be a requirement later for a paved surface to be laid between 2" and 4" thick at an additional cost. The Building Committee has suggested that the road be closed for a week which will impact a lot of activities this summer. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that Mr. Weissberg will work to keep a section open from Maiden Lane for the ambulance. She suggested that they have a conversation with the town. Mrs. Neubig will reach out to Mr. Weissberg and Indus tomorrow to start scheduling and will then reach out to all the stakeholders. Mrs. Neubig added that the original quote from Nathan Jacobson was \$1.7 million, but this doesn't include many of the items that were in that quote. This is simply the reclamation of the base and Mrs. Neubig approximates the entire project to be about \$600,000. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that the district needs to be proactive with this since the Resident State Trooper and ambulance will both be located there. Mrs. Neubig added that they hope to be able to keep one lane open during the paving process.

Mrs. Dahlheimer acknowledged how hard the Building Committee has worked on this project.

In favor of awarding the RFP 2023-04 for design and construction services for a stabilized, full-depth reclamation (SFDR) of Pickett Lane to Indus in the amount of \$274,740: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

D. Discuss possible naming of band room at CRHS

Mr. Moore proposed naming the CRHS band room after Bruce Schmottlach, the district's first band director, and noted that Mr. Fisher would support that as he has worked closely with Mr. Schmottlach. The district has a policy for naming school facilities which requires they be dead for five years or achieved prominence in their field. Mr. Schmottlach has achieved prominence in many areas. The policy calls for a committee, a board member from Middlefield and one from Durham, as well as a citizen, to make a recommendation to the board. Mr. Moore felt it was excessive for one room, but that is the policy.

Mr. Moore noted that Dean Coutsouridis, Lisa Larsen, several students and Merrill Adams have all reached out about this. He asked for the board's support of this.

Dr. Schuch felt that the first thing required would be a two-thirds vote of the board who agree that the band room should be named. Once that is done, the committee has to solicit recommendations. He asked that the board consider how many rooms they want to have named throughout the district. Mrs. Petrella felt that, whatever the committee decides, there should be some type of recognition for Mr. Schmottlach. Dr. Schuch also suggested having the Policy Committee look at this before they move forward. Mr.

Moore added that other things have been named without going through this policy. Dr. Darcy was worried that things get pushed through to the board because someone has access to a board member and felt that that is what the policy is designed to prevent. She is not against the idea, but does feel there needs to be a process. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked exactly what the policy called and Dr. Schuch stated that the title of the policy is Naming of School or School Facilities and it may include but is not limited to gymnasiums, auditoriums, library/media centers, outdoor athletic fields and classrooms. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that it seemed like a long process and she would not want them to wait to honor Mr. Schmottlach.

Mr. Roraback offered his full support to noting that the district values long-term teachers and showing their appreciation. Mrs. Caramanella added that it would be a wonderful idea to honor Mr. Schmottlach with a plaque outside of the band room though she is skeptical of naming the room. Mr. Moore offered to get a plaque made and to present it to Mr. Schmottlach at an upcoming concert.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to create a plaque honoring Bruce Schmottlach as the first band/instrumental leader of Coginchaug Regional High School.

In favor of creating a plaque honoring Bruce Schmottlach as the first band/instrumental leader of Coginchaug Regional High School: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanella, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

A. Policy Committee Meeting - April 19, 2023

- 1. First read Series 2000 policies (February 13, 2023):**
 - a. Administration – Representative and Deliberative Groups 2220**
 - b. Administrative Job Descriptions 2139**
 - c. Administrative Leeway in Absence of Board of Education Policy 2210**
 - d. Administrative Lines of Responsibility 2121**
 - e. Administrative Staff Organization 2100**
 - f. Concept and Roles in Administration 2000**
 - g. Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness 2122**
 - h. Policy Book 2231**
 - I. Retention of Electronic Records and Information 2240**
 - j. Retention of Electronic Records Information - Shipman**
 - k. Security and Safety Plan - Shipman**
 - l. Superintendent 2131**
 - m. Uniform Treatment of Recruiters - Shipman**
 - n. Uniform Treatment of Recruiters 2230**

Mrs. Petrella suggested the board consider having a maximum of 10 policies reviewed at each board meeting. Dr. Schuch mentioned that that will lengthen the whole process and Mrs. Petrella felt that they could decide at the Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Moore then went through each of the individual policies. Policy 2220 was recommended for deletion. Policy 2139 will replace policy 2130 and will then move to 4100. Policy 2210 will stay as is.

The committee suggested policy 2121 be deleted. Policy 2100 will be merged into 2139 and moved to 4100. The committee also suggested deleting policy 2000. The committee recommended policy 2122 be changed to adopt the Shipman revised policy on school security and safety which has been updated. That policy would then be moved into the 3000 series.

The committee recommended policy 2231 be moved to the 9000 series, with minor changes. Policy 2240 was recommended to be replaced with the Shipman policy which is more current and move to the 3000 series. The committee suggested policy 2131 be moved to the 9000 series. Lastly, the committee recommended policy 2230 be replaced with the updated language from Shipman and move to the 5000 series.

The Policy Committee meets again next week to review the 3000 series.

2. Possible vote regarding the posting of community flyers

Mrs. Petrella explained that the motion was drafted by Shipman and Goodwin.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, that, beginning June 15, 2023, the district ceases use of the community flyers webpage and different social media accounts that posts notices by outside community organizations and limits such webpage and social media accounts to posting information about the district, district schools and school-sponsored and school-related events, activities and accomplishments.

Dr. Darcy had a concern with how school-related is defined. Mrs. Petrella felt that they need a policy to define some of the wording and the attorney agreed. Dr. Schuch agreed that it could be a gray area, but added that there are things that are posted that are clearly not school-related and this would at least shut that down.

In favor of, beginning June 15, 2023, the district ceases use of the community flyers webpage and different social media accounts that posts notices by outside community organizations and limits such webpage and social media accounts to posting information about the district, district schools and school-sponsored and school-related events, activities and accomplishments: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

B. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - April 26, 2023

Mrs. Dahlheimer reported that their past two meetings were on Google Meets and they will continue to do that. There is also a link to the recording in the minutes. They went over measures of success and had a lengthy discussion about the EL program and they will continue that discussion next month. They also discussed the Strong electives that will be offered in the Fall and Mrs. Dahlheimer added that all of the kids she has spoken to are incredibly excited. Mr. Roraback liked the course offerings and felt that some behavioral issues may be resolved with these courses.

The committee had an extensive discussion around summer school programming and Mrs. Siegel had applied for a state grant for possible summer enrichment. They also received a professional learning

update. They do have a lot of the agenda for next month's meeting as well. There may also be times when Student Achievement is discussed during a board work session.

C. Building Committee Meeting - May 3, 2023

Mrs. Petrella reported that Mr. Arum gave a presentation to the Building Committee and they also discussed other projects, including Pickett Lane. Mr. Moore added that they discussed the building permit issues with the field house and they have yet to see the final plans on that. A flow test was performed on the fire protection service for Strong and the high school and it looks like they will need to build a new pumphouse above ground which is already budgeted in Capital. The committee decided to hold off on the turf replacement for another year because it passed the Gmax test and is safe to use for another year.

Communications

Mrs. Petrella received an email from Nicole Ercolani asking questions about the grade 6 academic pacing guidelines for ELA, science and health and this was referred to Mrs. Quarato and Mrs. Siegel who have already addressed the issue. Mrs. Petrella also received an email from Nicole Zappone with questions about the reconfiguration. She also received an email from Cindy Felicia Kenyon regarding an incident that happened in Middletown.

Dr. Darcy thanked the people who have sent emails as she feels that Public Comment is not accessible to everyone. She would like the board to discuss having these emails being considered part of public comment if the people ask. Dr. Darcy received an email from Ann Cassidy who asked that she read it at the meeting. Dr. Darcy read: "Members of the Board, this is to request that the BOE reinstate the Wellness Committee. In past years, the Wellness Committee has functioned as an accessible and constructive vehicle for addressing important matters related to school climate and, when reinstated, it can provide another opportunity for enhancing the quality of our students' experience in District 13."

Mrs. Roy also received an email from John Swift who asked for it be read aloud. "I am requesting this email be read at the next meeting of the Board of Education on May 10th. This is to request that the Well-Being Committee meetings be reinstated and open to all who wish to attend." Mrs. Roy also received a separate email from a parent of a fourth-grader at Memorial "to bring awareness to the board that a disparity exists between the Brewster/Memorial track and the Lyman track. I want the board to be aware that this is not one program if one track has enriching field trips to places such as the Roger Williams Zoo and the Mystic Aquarium while learners at Brewster/Memorial have museum experiences brought to them in school, it is not the same. I do realize that the John Lyman PTA is sponsoring the zoo field trip, however the fourth graders at Memorial used to go to Plymouth Plantation which was an awesome experience. They have stopped going and instead bring Eli Whitney museum to the school and they go on a two-hour hike through Wadsworth. My child who is currently in fourth grade at Memorial has not been on a true field trip since fall of first grade. I do realize that COVID put a dent in field trips, but with society being over that hump, I would expect the learners to resume these enriching experiences. Going forward, I would like to see a policy that all learners, grade K-8, get to experience a true enriching, full-day field trip outside of school."

Mr. Moore explained that during COVID, they printed the emails as an attachment to the minutes. Dr. Darcy felt that it is important to allow for those opportunities as a way of transparency. Mrs. Caramanello

felt that the whole board should be able to prepare to do that as well. Mrs. Roy added that she thought that a reply to an email should be sent to the whole board. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that that should be at the chair's discretion. Mr. Roraback felt that if someone responds to an email, they need to be clear that it is not a response from the whole board. Dr. Schuch felt that the Communications Committee could come up with some recommendations for this.

Dr. Darcy clarified that she felt that if a constituent asks that something be read, it was her job to do that. Mrs. Dahlheimer agreed but added they need to be very careful about allowing someone to hide behind a written word instead of coming to the board directly. There have been a lot of issues that have gotten out of hand and felt that putting the letters in the minutes could be a gray area. Dr. Darcy agreed that they should not include anonymous emails and that the Communications Committee should deal with this. Mrs. Petrella added that it's only been within the past year or so that board meetings have been far more open to the community, with remote access being available.

Mr. Stone asked about the people that work second and third shift. He personally works second shift and takes vacation time to attend board meetings. Dr. Schuch felt that this is really about sharing the emails with the public, not providing access to the board. He added that it would then have to be all emails. Mrs. Caramanello added that that was her concern because they can't pick and choose which emails get shared. Mrs. Petrella noted that the board is receiving tremendously more communication than ever before. She believed that communications are for the board to help them make decisions and not necessarily for the entire community.

Dr. Darcy felt that it was implied that she had an agenda with the email she read and added that this was the only email she has received that was not sent to everyone. Mrs. Caramanello agreed that a policy is necessary. Mrs. Petrella added that she would be reluctant to share an email with the community if she wasn't asked to do so.

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt it was important to talk about the field trip in the third and fourth grades as the kids should be getting the same experiences. An out-of-state overnight trip needs to be approved by the board, but an out-of-state day trip is approved by the superintendent. Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that they have not only received emails about it, but it's been on social media as well. She felt it was very hurtful to the kids involved.

Mrs. Petrella reviewed that the board voted to have one program, yet there is still a misconception that there are two programs or something different about the schools. She felt that there should be some criteria or procedure put into place until reconfiguration is straightened out and there is consistency across grade levels. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that there are simple solutions that the administration could come up with though it is not under the purview of the board. Mr. Roraback added that some field trips cost quite a bit for families.

Dr. Schuch added that they are talking about five different schools with five different sets of administration and PTOs. He asked how involved the board would want to be in being prescriptive around this. Field trips are not mandated and typically start with teachers. He felt that the message may be that the board doesn't trust the administration or teachers to make these decisions. He felt that mandating which field trips are taken is taking it a step too far. Mrs. Dahlheimer didn't feel that was what they were saying and clarified that they would want kids to get equal opportunities for experiences, but Dr. Schuch wanted to know who would determine what is equal. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that just

because it's not mandated doesn't mean they shouldn't be doing it, especially since COVID and looking at the reconfiguration to be one track. Dr. Schuch did not disagree that these are valid points, but felt that this was not the venue to be discussing them. He felt that it should be a discussion with principals and the parents going directly to them, and with PTAs and teachers. Dr. Schuch would not want to be reactive to a particular situation when information about it has been out there all school year. He added that some of the teachers are feeling beat up about this. Memorial did make the decision to do a fifth-grade field trip, but to do third and fourth slightly differently.

Mrs. Dahlheimer added that she saw a comment today about Lyman no longer being a HOT or ID school and not receiving state grants for such experiences, and that the Lyman administration and PTA budget for these experiences as part of their goal each year to continue the unique programs that the Lyman community has grown to love and expect. Dr. Schuch asked if Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that the PTA should not have a voice in what activities they would like to support and she stated that she does not want them to have a voice if it doesn't go along with one track. She felt that if it changes the way that the children are experiencing their education across grade levels, it should not be supported. Dr. Schuch felt that not every child, even at the same school, has the same experience. Dr. Schuch once again felt that this was not the venue to be discussing this level of specificity.

Mr. Stone asked why one school with a fourth grade and another school with a fourth grade would not collaborate to do things together. Dr. Schuch stated that they collaborate on many things. Mr. Stone felt that they didn't do that with this issue and there is a divide. Dr. Schuch understood that they were honoring what the teacher teams came up with. Mr. Stone felt that fourth grade should all be the same team. Mrs. Roy felt that these types of activities should be made available to parents when they choose which school to send their kids to. Mrs. Caramanello agreed and has heard that as a common theme. She felt that the two schools need to figure out how the grades can have common experiences. She has heard that there is a population of kids who are getting enrichment and a zoo experience out of state yet there is another group of kids who are getting nothing.

Mrs. Petrella felt that they were getting far too into the weeds on this issue. She did agree that these types of issues should go to the school first. Mrs. Petrella felt that they are reacting to a parent's concern and it is not their place to decide how that should or shouldn't be addressed. Mrs. Caramanello clarified that there were several concerns about this. Dr. Schuch understood that the board would like this looked into and addressed. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that the board has directed the administration to have a one-track experience and she believes that this incident is detrimental to reconfiguration and could cause issues between the two schools. Mr. Moore added that the board struggled for four years to decide to have a single-track program and it took a lot of time and effort. He believed that the public sending this to the board is in recognition of that board decision and it is the board's responsibility to uphold that decision. Mr. Moore felt it was worthwhile that the board deal with this and let the administration know that this is not acceptable and needs to be fixed. Mr. Roraback noted that this is just one snippet of the administration's lives and also believed that the administrators truly do want to collaborate. He felt it could have been an oversight. Mr. Moore clarified that he felt this should be an issue for the board as it was the board who directed this one track to happen.

Mr. Moore also mentioned that Mr. Ford's Friday update is always separate from the other schools. Mrs. Roy added that Lyman has student-led parent-teacher conferences starting in second grade, which is different as well. Mr. Moore felt that all of those kinds of things create issues for the board and the board does need to talk about them.

Dr. Schuch felt that the principals feel that the definition of one track has not been clearly conveyed to them. Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that it was actually in the minutes, stating one track which means the kids get the same experiences. She felt that if that has not been delineated, that is an even harder issue. Mrs. Roy was also not sure where the confusion would arise. Mr. Mennone stated that while trying to reconfigure and close Lyman, this will make it extremely more difficult. They will end up keeping five schools, with a budget that won't be able to pass. Mrs. Caramanello added that an out-of-state trip needs to be approved by the superintendent and that would have been the time to make sure that there was equal opportunity. She felt that many people have shared their disappointment with the board about this and it should be a top priority.

Dr. Schuch felt that that should be part of the field trip policy if that's what the board wants. Mrs. Petrella felt this was a bigger issue because of the fact that there had been two different programs.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

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

*In favor of adjourning the regular meeting of the Board of Education: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone.
Motion carried.*

Meeting was adjourned at 9:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First