

Revised

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, July 5, 2023 at 5:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board members present: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone (by phone and in person later in the meeting)

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, Mrs. Quarato, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Development, Ms. Siegel, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Accountability, Mrs. Stone, Principal of Coginchaug Regional High School and Mrs. Trainer, Assistant Principal of Coginchaug Regional High School

Dr. Schuch called the special meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

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

Mr. Moore noted that items 12, A and B, have already been covered and should be removed from the agenda. Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that this is a special meeting and the agenda cannot be revised.

In favor of approving the agenda, 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.

Election of Officers

Dr. Schuch opened the floor for nominations for the office of chair. Mrs. Petrella nominated Mrs. Dahlheimer for chair. Hearing no other nominations, Dr. Schuch closed the nominations.

In favor of Lindsay Dahlheimer as chair: 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 thanked everyone for their support. She then opened the floor for nominations for secretary. Mrs. Caramanello nominated Mr. Roraback for secretary. Hearing no other nominations, Mrs. Dahlheimer closed the nominations.

In favor of Jamie Roraback as secretary: 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 then opened the floor for nominations for treasurer. Mr. Mennone nominated Mr. Stone for treasurer. Hearing no other nominations, Mrs. Dahlheimer closed the nominations.

In favor of Jason Stone as treasurer: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Work Session

A. NEASC District Accreditation Discussion - Fran Kennedy

Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that they had a lengthy conversation at the Student Achievement meeting and wanted more information presented to the board about the current accreditation for the district and its schools.

Fran Kennedy thanked everyone for the invitation. He is an Associate Director with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Mr. Kennedy distributed a handout to the board members and explained that his goal was to provide information about district accreditation.

NEASC is the oldest accreditor in the United States and accredits over 1,600 schools and institutions around the world. District accreditation aligns the practices in each school with the standards for accreditation which are based on contemporary best practices and are updated from time to time. A district-wide self-assessment is a much broader look than just having one school accredited. A team of peers would visit the individual schools and district office to review common goals. It also ensures that one school is not treated like an island and encourages K-12 cohesiveness. Some districts use it to help with strategic planning. Full district accreditation also ensures a well-articulated K-12 curriculum and a Vision of the Graduate. It also assures families and external educational institutions that all the district's schools have a high-quality learning experience.

District accreditation may seem to be overwhelming, but the procedures allow personalization for each district and have just one self-reflection. There is then only one collaborative conference visit for all of the schools at the same time. There will also be one team visit and a candidacy visit.

NEASC developed new standards in 2020 and they were updated again in 2023. The new protocols are based on growth rather than adherence. Mr. Kennedy gave examples of several districts who have done district-wide accreditation. In the past, self-studies used to take about two years to complete and the new self-reflection only takes about three-and-a half months.

Mr. Kennedy then went on to describe the process. The process has the districts and schools identify the areas for growth. They hope that the process is authentic, real and valuable for districts and the feedback has shown that.

NEASC's five standards now include student learning, learning resources, learning support, professional practices and learning culture. Mr. Kennedy then went on to review each of the standards and gave examples of the principles within the standards. Districts and schools rate themselves on these principles. There are also eight foundational elements which Mr. Kennedy reviewed. Fran Kennedy then reviewed a possible timeline for accreditation with the first step being to engage in self-reflection. Collaborative conferences follow that for two days, including school tours and classroom visits. The accreditation in 2027 would be a little longer, with visits being three days.

Dr. Darcy verified that there would be an increased cost to accredit the district rather than just the high school and Mr. Kennedy agreed, but noted that the cost is lower than doing each of the schools separately.

They are also working on a way to make it less expensive and instead of charging a membership fee to every school, there will instead be one district membership fee. That approach would save close to \$5,000 for District 13. He felt that the cost for accrediting the high school alone would be about \$3,700 and the rest of the district would be about another \$2,900 annually.

Mrs. Roy asked how reconfiguration would affect the cost of accreditation. Mr. Kennedy explained that NEASC would work with the district on that, but added that the less buildings there are, the less it would cost. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if it would be smart to go ahead with district accreditation when they are in flux with reconfiguration. Mr. Kennedy felt that that should have zero effect on the ability to go through the process unless the district is building new construction or renovating as new. If the district is going to renovate as new, he would suggest seeking postponement. Mrs. Caramanello asked if accreditation is always a 10-year span and would that span be shorter if it was just the high school. Mrs. Stone explained that it is a 10-year timeline. Mr. Kennedy noted that NEASC recognizes that 10 years is a long time and added that self-reflection and collaborative conference visits are two years apart.

Mr. Roraback noted that the district has always been an attractive place to send kids to school and asked if being able to say that the entire district is accredited would be a good thing. Mr. Kennedy told a story of how impressed he was that an elementary school he visited when his kids were young went through the process of accreditation. They decided to live in the town based on that accreditation. He did feel that realtors being able to say that the entire district is accredited would be a good thing. Mrs. Stone added that people never ask if you are accredited, but they sure know if you're not. She also believes that accrediting the entire district would put them at the front of the line rather than at the back of the line 10 years from now.

Mr. Mennone asked if being accredited can give any additional federal funding and Mr. Kennedy noted that there are a number of grants that require accreditation. Schools also have to be accredited in order to be a test center for SATs and college boards. Mr. Roraback felt that he didn't see much around facilities in the standards and asked if the district's aging buildings would be an issue. Mr. Kennedy stated that they would only be looking for things that affect the curricular activities. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt it was an amazing process and would provide the district with great accolades, but her concern would be, between reconfiguration and a new reading program, how taxing this would be on staff. Mr. Kennedy noted that before 2019, it was required that the entire professional staff be assigned to a committee. Now, it could be one person from each building representing each of the five standards.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked Mrs. Stone and Mrs. Trainer how they felt about this and Mrs. Stone felt that it would be a feather in the district's cap to do it. She offered to talk to the principals at the other schools about this and they would both be willing to help oversee the process. Dr. Darcy agreed that it would be a plus, but it's not something that they need as anything in this could be done without an outside consultant. She also felt that it was not worth it, with all of the changes happening in the district. Mrs. Petrella felt that it would be great to have this as a district initiative, but had some concerns about the major changes that are still happening. They are still looking at the vision of the district as well as possible renovations and she wasn't sure that the timing is right. Mrs. Trainer felt that it is set up in a very user-friendly way and is all about self-reflection. Mrs. Stone reminded everyone that the high school will be doing it anyway.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked about the timeline for the high school and Mr. Kennedy explained that the high school will be invited to an accreditation seminar in the first week of May and the self-reflection will be

done in the 2025 school year. School visits will be done in 2027. He also gave several reasons for why it would be helpful to have NEASC do the district accreditation and noted that they will work with the district. Mrs. Stone added that Mr. Kennedy has also pushed out the high school timing for another year. Dr. Schuch added that he let NEASC know that nothing was budgeted for this and they agreed to work to be sure that any budget impact wouldn't happen until the following year's budget. Mr. Kennedy added that everyone is fully aware of the ideas that the district is considering.

Mrs. Caramanello asked if the whole district had to begin the process at the same time and Mr. Kennedy stated that they are very flexible with this and will make it work. Mr. Moore felt that there would be value to pulling the one-program track together through the self-reflection. He thought that this would be a good time to do that. Mrs. Caramanello added that even the self-reflection would be done separately if they are still in the two schools.

Dr. Schuch noted that if anyone has any questions, they can forward them to him and he will pass them along.

B. School Climate Discussion - Jen Keane

Mrs. Keane reported that they had an excellent meeting with Mrs. Gonzalez at Strong School, with a roundtable discussion about the school climate survey results. They brainstormed ideas of ways to improve school climate. Mrs. Keane was here tonight to answer any questions about the school climate survey results.

Mrs. Petrella noted that both parents and students mentioned bullying and that was a concern for her. Homework was another thing. She felt that they need to take a look at the homework policy and make a strong statement about bullying of any kind. Mrs. Petrella noted that there was a lot of positive in the survey results and she did not want to focus on the negative. Mrs. Dahlheimer wondered how much of a benefit it would be to have community discussions at each school. She also thought it would be great to include a couple of kids as well as teachers. They heard feedback at the Strong meeting about engaging more with parents to allow for better relationships with the teachers. Mrs. Petrella also felt that they need to look at the staff to be sure they are happy and what concerns they may have.

Mrs. Keane explained that they plan to have more focus groups with parents, teachers and students. Mrs. Roy asked what action steps are being taken in response to some of the responses. One question was about being aware of or experiencing racism in the school from a district perspective and 92.6 percent from one school agreed, with 0 percent disagreeing. Another school was 72 percent. Mrs. Roy and Mr. Mennone were both concerned with the neutral response. Mrs. Keane explained that that would be that the respondent didn't have an opinion and she removes those responses in her mind. They know they need to change the survey and will look at that moving forward.

Mrs. Roy reiterated that she does not know what steps are being taken as a result of these survey responses. She asked what is planned in the upcoming school year. Mrs. Keane reviewed that there is the District Climate Committee, School Climate Committees and School Student Assistance Teams that meet every week. She was in a meeting today planning DEI instruction and professional development for the next school year. Mrs. Roy asked if they planned to involve the community in those discussions and Mrs. Keane stated that they had just piloted that at Strong School. Mrs. Caramanello thought that restorative practices was set up to address some of these issues and asked if that was now in all of the schools. Mrs.

Keane explained that that has happened, starting at Strong, but then COVID happened. It has now started again, but it is slower and different than they had initially thought. Some programs are more beneficial at the lower grade levels. Mrs. Caramanello suggested that being proactive should be the focus with the restorative practices. Mrs. Stone noted that training was done at Memorial before COVID, but she believes that more resources are needed and everyone needs to get on board. Mrs. Roy asked if the board members could attend training on that and Mrs. Keane assured her they were invited.

Mrs. Keane added that one of her biggest disappointments about the survey was the participation level. There were 58 responses from parents at Strong which is not indicative of everyone's opinion. The committee made the decision to tally the comments because of the low participation rates. Dr. Darcy stated that every step that is put between raw data and the audience leaves it open to interpretation and also felt that a low return on survey is indicative of the culture and climate. Mrs. Roy wondered if the community would respond more if they saw actual steps being taken in response to the data. Mrs. Keane also felt it was important when they give the survey to parents. Mrs. Caramanello added that true responses from teachers would need to be gained through an outside source. Dr. Darcy added that that is also indicative of culture and climate because she has seen districts with full participation because they don't fear any retribution.

Mrs. Roy asked if exit interviews are conducted with people leaving the district and if there is any mention of culture or climate. Mr. Brough responded that they do conduct exit interviews and those types of questions can be added. Dr. Darcy asked if they do stay interviews and they do not. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if they do exit interviews with eighth graders who are not going to Coginchaug and Mrs. Keane did not know if that was done. Mrs. Dahlheimer would like to have community discussions at each school, possibly twice a year. She would also like to see the PTOs do more programming and events between teachers and parents.

Going back to the Strong meeting, Mrs. Keane added that sometimes kids are afraid to snitch, parents want to feel more welcome, some felt that Parent Square can be overwhelming and the website and calendar are sometimes hard to navigate. She felt that they need to find the appropriate balance when providing communication. They also talked about academics and curriculum. There was a long discussion about parent conferences and it was felt they are too short and sometimes not meaningful. Discipline and the effectiveness of punishment was also talked about and is an ongoing conversation. Mrs. Keane noted that they want to educate students on every level, including finding a balance with punishment. Mental health was part of the discussion at the meeting as well as SEL practices. They talked about racism and the forms it takes in the district. Mrs. Gonzalez had felt that things were getting better, but there was still work to do. They talked about engagement and got positive feedback on unified sports. They talked about student-led assemblies and projects as well as advisories. Resurrection and reboot of the district's core ethical values and commitment to those were also discussed.

Mr. Roraback stated that he attended the award ceremony at Coginchaug and felt that the kids were wonderful. Mr. Moore added that the unified sports programs and classrooms have helped a lot with student involvement and community.

Mrs. Keane explained that the outline of how things will be addressed is attached to the end of her June report. She welcomed any thoughts, ideas or recommendations and felt that there was always room for growth. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that this was something the board needs to look at as well.

Mrs. Roy felt that having a Coffee with Admin would be a good idea for an informal setting where people can have conversations. She also felt that it promotes transparency and approachability as well. She offered to reach out to the Windsor superintendent for more details.

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

A. In-person public comment

Emma Quick, from Durham, spoke about school choice. She wanted to ensure that the children are receiving equitable experiences across all schools. She noted that it was the field trip that broke the camel's back, but this neither starts nor ends with field trips. In the 2019-2020 school year, the Board of Education notified parents that the HOT school/ID program at Lyman would be closing and integrated throughout all of the elementary schools, creating a one-track plan. Parents were promised that all children would have an equal experience, no matter which track was chosen. Slide shows were shown, and are still being shown, to incoming kindergarten families. What they are not being told is that Memorial did not participate in the training in 2019 and the HOT/ID philosophies were not implemented there. Parents are not being told that if they choose Brewster/Memorial, these things will end when their kids leave Brewster but continue through third and fourth grade at Lyman. Weekly assemblies bring benefit to the school community and the children individually, building confidence, independence, leadership, community and school spirit and engage parents, and create strong community members who know how to speak in public. The third and fourth graders at Memorial struggled this year with anxiety and behavioral issues during their musical and band concert and it was later recognized that it was the first time some of them had been on stage. Meanwhile, the children at Lyman and Brewster have had multiple opportunities for this. Mrs. Quick has still not gotten an answer on how many times Outdoor Education was with each grade level, but knows that her third grader at Memorial did not go on any hikes with them. She was told that Outdoor Education is incorporated as it fits the curriculum, but believes that Lyman's third grade went to Bushy Hill Nature in the Fall in addition to their zoo trip. She asked who is monitoring this. After asking these questions, Mrs. Durkin has told them that these opportunities can likely not be implemented in the upcoming school year because the staff did not go through the training in 2019. Mrs. Quick is not trying to put more on the teachers and she doesn't feel that the teachers at Memorial need to sit through a seminar in order to implement these things at Memorial. While she is confident that Mrs. Durkin can get Memorial there in time, her own child doesn't have time. She would like to see changes made in the upcoming school year. She would like the board and the superintendent make a definitive statement as to whether Memorial will be implementing these things in the upcoming school year and to also implement a plan to ensure that the children are receiving an equitable experience, regardless of school. She has asked whose job it is to monitor activities across schools to ensure equity and Dr. Schuch told her it was currently no one's job and is up to the individual principals and teachers. Mrs. Quick would like the board to identify where this responsibility will fall and who will be monitoring enrichment opportunities at each school. If the current Board of Education members are looking at moving their children to Lyman, that is a huge red flag to her and says that these things are not going to be addressed this year. She reiterated how much she appreciates the teachers and felt that this is a district problem, not a teacher problem. She added by noting that her child is eight years old and deserves the same experiences he would have gotten at Lyman. Many children have had difficulties transitioning to Memorial and it feels like a middle school, not an elementary school. The Board of Education is tasked with enforcing policies and instructing the administration to ensure quality experiences across grade levels. She would like the board to hold the administration accountable to the one-track program and

distribution of the ID/HOT school philosophies across all schools equitably for the 2023-2024 school year, as parents were promised in 2019. Mrs. Quick asked that these issues be addressed tonight during agenda item 10A.

B. Remote public comment

Maureen Funke noted that she was at the Strong climate meeting and felt it was great. She added that participation in the survey was disappointing and in the meeting as well, with only eight people attending. She does believe that a district-wide and school-wide statement needs to be made that bullying is not tolerated. She suggested talking to people in an assembly, at a music concert, at a football game, or at a soccer game to continue these community conversations. Mrs. Funke also felt that re-implementing the Well-Being Committee would be a good start and the fact that that is not happening is maybe the strongest statement being made. She also agreed that there shouldn't be a neutral option on the survey.

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

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Regular Meeting - June 7, 2023

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the minutes of the regular Board of Education meeting of June 7, 2023, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of the regular Board of Education meeting of June 7, 2023, 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

A. Food in Schools Update

Dr. Schuch reviewed that they had had a prior conversation about this issue, both with the board and the Policy Committee. The Wellness policy 5135 and Allergy policy 5140 both speak to the spirit and letter of trying to strike a balance with this issue. The elementary principals spoke to the teachers and staff are mostly comfortable with the current practices, with no food being brought in by parents but schools can regulate periodic food events. PTAs did not get a lot of feedback, but some people would like to go back to sending in cupcakes for birthdays while others felt it was safer and more appropriate as it is now. Nurses have a very strong feeling that no outside food should be brought in. Dr. Schuch spoke with representatives from other districts and also looked at their policies. He found that most districts discourage any outside food, but do not prohibit the occasional pizza party or popsicles as long as the school controls it. There are some districts that are stricter than that and most seem to be emphasizing non-food-based celebrations. Dr. Schuch felt that if they stayed as they are now, they would be in line with other districts.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if either of the policies prohibited a classroom teacher from bringing in food for a project or celebration and Dr. Schuch did not believe they do; however, the principal would still have to approve that. Mrs. Dahlheimer worried that that would create more inequities between classrooms. Mrs.

Petrella felt that teachers should have the option to have food in the classroom and Mrs. Caramanello mentioned the inequities between classrooms. Mrs. Petrella added that not every classroom is run the same way and Mrs. Caramanello noted that every classroom had the opportunity to have things sent in for celebrations. Mrs. Caramanello added that kids bring in goodie bags that don't contain food and that takes a lot of pressure off the teachers. Dr. Schuch felt that was why the schools are doing school-wide food events.

Mrs. Caramanello stated that her daughter's last normal year of school was kindergarten and they didn't celebrate birthdays. For special events, her daughter's teacher gave her a recipe for special cookies that everyone could eat. Mrs. Dahlheimer would want to be sure that teachers were still allowed to use food in lessons. Mr. Moore felt that it should be up to the principal and if it's working now, they should continue with that. Mrs. Stone felt they could let the administrators know what they are looking for and they can agree on what and how events would be celebrated.

Dr. Darcy felt that if the board believes that this is something they should allow, that needs to include field trips as well. If the board trusts teachers to make decisions about food and celebrations, then they need to trust them to decide what field trip decisions are made. She did feel there is a deeper issue than field trips, but the board needs to be careful about what they allow and don't allow. She reminded everyone that food celebrations and field trips are extra work for teachers. Mrs. Caramanello felt that that opens up a big can of worms with the differences between teachers and their energy level. Dr. Darcy felt that they are not able to force teachers to take kids on a field trip as it's not in their job description.

Dr. Schuch will add these two policies to the agenda of the August Policy Committee meeting.

Staff Reports

A. ADA Compliance Discussion - Kim Neubig

Mrs. Roy had asked to have this discussion and Mrs. Neubig reported that the most recent facilities studies were done in 2016 and 2021 for Lyman only. Between \$2.5 to \$3 million worth of non-ADA-compliant items were identified, using the guidelines that were updated in 2010. Mrs. Neubig did escalate that number, but probably not aggressively enough. Those ADA standards focus on restrooms, door sizes, clearances, hardware, cabinetry, handrails, stairs, ramps and general access to all spaces. She did point out that it is common for older buildings to have non-compliant areas. A number of the non-compliant areas have been addressed as schools have been renovated over the years. The 2010 standards now include a few other things, such as recreational facilities, play areas and other facilities but are not very different from 1991.

State and local governments are not required to take any action to assure compliance that would result in any undue financial and administrative burden. There is a Safe Harbor clause that states that buildings that complied with the 1991 standards do not need to comply with the 2010 standards. If a building is renovated as new, that would require the entire building to be brought up to code. An expansion would not require the existing section to be brought up to code. Fire code is separate and must always be compliant.

There are grants for code compliance projects which are called non-priority projects and can be approved at any time during the year. Reimbursement rates would be the same as what the district has for

renovation. The district does not need to have a match in place when applying for these grants. If a code compliance project is done, it does not have to be the whole building.

Mrs. Neubig felt that the Building Committee would need to be involved in any code compliance projects. She reviewed that there are \$20 million worth of capital needs spread throughout the schools in the district. Two or three roofs are hitting their life expectancy within the next three years. She encouraged everyone to not forget about the capital projects at the other schools while they think about Memorial. She felt they may need to talk about bonding for a number of projects.

Mrs. Petrella asked if other districts keep ADA compliance up-to-date or do it when renovations are done and Mrs. Neubig felt it was more common to do it as needed. She also noted that they address specific instances that are brought to their attention through the budget process. Dr. Schuch emphasized that they are compliant with ADA standards from 1991.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked how long the state allows for the district to make a necessary accommodation for a student and Mrs. Neubig did not know that there was a set time frame. Mrs. Keane noted that it was accessibility and access to education and they have had to modify and update things, but have not come across a situation where a student did not have access.

Mrs. Roy asked what would happen if there is a student going into first grade who needs accommodations and if that would happen first at Brewster and then again at Memorial when they get there. Mrs. Neubig stated that they usually know when a student requires accommodations and they plan for that through the budget process. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt it would be a great thing to update the ADA compliance, but understands it's a Pandora's box. Mrs. Neubig reviewed a number of items included on the list of ADA issues.

New Business

A. CRHS Field Trip Request - Guatemala

Mrs. Stone explained that this is more of a service trip than a field trip, with a group called Squads Abroad. She felt it would be a really good opportunity and would be more than just a trip. Mrs. Stone would also like to go along on the trip. Squads Abroad has stated that they would never take anyone anywhere where they would put their business or the group at risk. Mrs. Germond took one of the trips and always felt safe. Her Global Studies class already does remote work with the group. They are proposing to take this trip once school gets out. They hope to do non-health-related things on this first trip, such as infrastructure projects and cultural activities. Mrs. Germond had worked on building hand washing stations. Dr. Darcy commented that Guatemala is the most magical place she's ever been and this would be an amazing opportunity. Mrs. Stone noted that they are allowed to take three chaperones with up to 18 kids, but they could always take more people. Mrs. Stone felt it could be a little pricey, but hoped to have the year for the kids to fund-raise.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the CRHS Field Trip Request to Guatemala.

In favor of approving the CRHS Field Trip request to Guatemala: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

B. CRHS Field Trip Request - Virginia Beach

Mrs. Trainer explained that this is similar to the trips that have occurred in the past and the band and choral program will travel together to participate in a music festival. They will also go to Busch Gardens. Mrs. Stone added that the participants will miss two days of school. The cost of this trip is approximately \$950 and is subsidized by POPs. Mrs. Stone noted that they do plan to do some fund-raising.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the CRHS Field Trip Request to Virginia Beach.

In favor of approving the CRHS Field Trip request to Virginia Beach: 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 accept Memorial School Roof Project #213-0050RR as complete

Mrs. Neubig reported that the Building Committee has already approved the project and accepted it as complete. At this point, the board needs to accept it as complete.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, to accept Memorial School Roof Project #213-0050RR as complete.

In favor of accepting Memorial School Roof Project #213-0050RR as complete: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Old Business

A. Elementary School Choice Discussion

Mrs. Dahlheimer explained that this agenda item is a result of multiple discussions for multiple reasons, including field trips and experiences across grade levels. She also wanted to discuss how much longer they want to wait for school choice to continue based on what is best for the district, parents, students and staff.

Mr. Moore noted that, in 2019, they culminated a three-year discussion with the decision to have a single-track program followed by closing John Lyman. They felt that many of the programs at Lyman needed to be in the rest of the district, primarily at Brewster, and those programs are what people have been talking about now. Field trips were really never one of the issues, but it was more the HOT activities and individual attention to students. At that time, they had a buyer for the building and they were hoping it would be gone within six to eight months. Those issues seemingly got buried under bigger issues that happened along the way. Mr. Moore felt that they need to focus on the curriculum as well as student involvement and attention. He added that there are different events in different schools, noting the music

festival at Brewster. He felt that teachers and principals will have different approaches. Mr. Moore felt that they will have at least three more years with this configuration unless something happens. He felt that moving some teachers around may create some cross-pollination of the programs or even change principals from one school to another.

Mrs. Dahlheimer added that she has had that conversation about the principals being part of it, but the kids need to be in the same building together. Until the kids are starting together and finishing together, she believes it will not get much better. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that they will always battle equity between programs, curriculum, field trips and celebrations. The board needs to work with what they are able to do currently and look at all options, even if it means utilizing the buildings in ways that are not what most parents may want to do. She noted that it would be within board's authority to utilize the buildings and suggested preK-1 at Brewster, 2-3 at Lyman, 4-5 at Memorial, 6-8 at Strong and 9-12 at Cuginchaug. She felt that that would stop some of the issues they have been seeing. Mrs. Dahlheimer emphasized how hard the teachers were working and noted that the board needs to find ways to make it easier for them and for parents to be involved. She noted that her kids thoroughly enjoyed the program at Lyman and their field trips complimented their classwork.

Mrs. Caramanello felt that the same was true at Brewster and the teams picked field trips that are tied to the curriculum. She felt that they use the word "enrichment" and they should probably be using "experiences." Certain groups are getting different experiences, but the district is so small that that doesn't need to happen.

Mrs. Petrella reviewed that, in 2019, the board was pretty strong about there being one program and they also discussed the elements of the HOT school program that were most beneficial. They expected those to be happening in all schools. Mrs. Petrella felt that they cannot change school choice until the schools have the same grade levels. She understood that that would mean a lot of transitions, but it would at least provide equality in the children's experiences and integrate staff. Mrs. Petrella felt that they have to look at combining the grades, not for this year, but for next year. She felt that something needs to be done and it needs to be done soon because what they have now doesn't make sense.

Mr. Mennone agreed, but was concerned about the infrastructure. They have heard that the buildings are no longer able to house kids. He questioned where they would get the money to keep five schools open and felt that they need to have a plan moving forward. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that they need to have both a short-term plan and a long-term plan.

Mrs. Caramanello reminded everyone about when they closed Korn School and how it hurt to begin with, but eventually eased up and there have been many versions of the configuration. Mrs. Caramanello added that the incoming group of parents know nothing of that history and how many groups have been moved and inconvenienced. She liked the idea that Mrs. Dahlheimer proposed and felt it would be a good way to solve some of the issues now. Mrs. Stone added that she was hired at Korn School in the spring of 2013 and was notified that the school would be closing soon. The vote was taken in November and the school was closed the following June. Mrs. Caramanello worked at Brewster at the time and they made room for the third graders. Mr. Moore noted that the district still doesn't have money to fix Lyman if something seriously breaks which may mean kids have to move once again.

Mrs. Neubig noted that they are waiting for the architect's report on the entire district and he will be coming next Monday to talk to the administrators. He will also engage the community in the fall. Mrs.

Dahlheimer felt that the consensus is to eliminate school choice for the 2024-2025 school year and the need to explore the options she proposed in combination with the Memorial project. She felt it was important to talk about this issue now in order to let parents know.

Mrs. Neubig stated that she and Mr. Proia will be working with the leadership team to create a plan for where the kids will go if the boilers fail at Lyman or Brewster. Mrs. Caramanello noted that the board does not have the authority to not use the schools right now, so they might as well configure it in the best way possible. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that asking for money to keep a school operational might be more palatable than asking for money to renovate-as-new. Mrs. Neubig added that they could do that, but they would still have a very old school with a new roof.

Ms. Betty made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to eliminate kindergarten school choice in the 2024-2025 school year as well as allowing the administration to explore the options of a reconfiguration of a possible preK-1 at Brewster, 2-3 at Lyman, 4-5 at Memorial, 6-8 at Strong and 9-12 at Coginchaug.

Mrs. Roy asked what exploring the options actually meant and Mrs. Dahlheimer hoped for pros and cons on what is doable and what isn't. Dr. Darcy agreed with looking into this and reviewed the options of doing nothing, doing what is proposed now and the Taj Mahal. She felt that the board needs to have a plan B or a next step because it feels to her that the Memorial renovation is out of the realm of what they can do. They also know that keeping five schools open is a way to have consistency, but asked what is in between. She felt that Lyman is going to collapse, so what would the alternative be. Mr. Mennone noted that they are still waiting for numbers and Mrs. Dahlheimer added that they hope to get information from the architect as to what can be pared down. She felt that they need to keep talking about next steps. Mr. Moore noted that they had considered neighborhood schools and also moving seventh and/or eighth grade to the high school.

Mrs. Neubig explained that while the numbers for Memorial were larger than expected, they were vetted by another firm and were appropriate for what the district asked. She added that if that project were to happen and Brewster and Lyman were closed, the district would avoid an estimated \$13 million in capital improvements. Mrs. Neubig felt that the district should pursue updated information as to if Brewster can close and Mrs. Dahlheimer added that the deed is questionable as there are no longer any heirs. Mrs. Neubig stated that it really isn't a fiscally prudent option to do nothing.

Mrs. Roy felt that families with kids entering preK will be in a tough position unless school choice is eliminated and asked how it would affect the before-school program that has been talked about. Mr. Brough explained that the plan is to have the before-school program at Brewster and busing would be available to take children to their respective buildings. Mrs. Roy felt this would be a great step, but hoped that it could be made by next month so parents can plan ahead.

In favor of eliminating kindergarten school choice in the 2024-2025 school year as well as allowing the administration to explore the options of a reconfiguration of a possible preK-1 at Brewster, 2-3 at Lyman, 4-5 at Memorial, 6-8 at Strong and 9-12 at Coginchaug: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Mrs. Stone explained that when Korn School closed, they had weekly meetings and the superintendent reported to the board monthly. Mrs. Petrella felt that it needs to be a priority for the administration that

programming during this school year be as unified as possible and the experiences for the students be as similar as possible. Mrs. Roy felt it was more than just field trips and Mrs. Petrella added that they need to try to incorporate more of the elements of the ID program. Mrs. Dahlheimer would also like Memorial to get the appropriate training.

Board of Education Student Representatives Discussion

Mrs. Petrella had sent a survey to everyone regarding student representation. Only one school did not have student reps on the Board of Education, but they had board members attend student advisory committee meetings. She felt that they need to be able to reach out and have more personal conversations with students. Most districts have one to three reps on the board, but she would like to connect with as many students as possible.

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that student representatives and student outreach are two separate things. Ms. Betty asked if the purpose of a representative would be to hear from the student body because, if that were the case, she would like to see kids from multiple grade levels. Mrs. Dahlheimer explained that that depends on the school district. Ms. Betty felt that it should be done on a revolving basis and they should start it at a younger age. Mrs. Roy felt that engagement and outreach are different and they should try to hear from all the grade levels, but how that is done may be different. She felt that it is the board's job to engage the students which can be done regardless of having a student rep on the board. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that the board can actually make a policy describing what a student representative does. Mr. Mennone felt that they would still only get a very limited scope.

Mr. Mennone suggested doing an assembly with the board members present to take questions and answers. Mr. Moore felt that one of the responsibilities of a student board representative would be to bring the board's information to the students, rather than bringing information to the board. Dr. Schuch felt that it would be a big ask for a student to do this. Mrs. Stone suggested putting it out as an opportunity and see what happens. Dr. Schuch added that it should be a very well-defined selection process. Mr. Mennone suggested having the captains of every sports team come to a board meeting as well as other groups. Mrs. Caramanello suggested having three different reporters every month.

Mrs. Dahlheimer suggested that a few board members get together to develop some ideas for outreach and discuss it next month.

Committee Reports

- A. Policy Committee Meeting - June 7, 2023**
- B. Building Committee Meeting - June 7, 2023**

These meetings were reported on at the June board meeting.

Mrs. Neubig let the board know that the base coat is being done on Pickett Lane and the top coat can be done immediately after the base coat. That quote is in line with the state bid. The vendor has worked in the district recently having previously paved both ends of the road. The Building Committee will meet next week and she asked if they can contract with the company or if the board wants her to go through the RFP process which will prolong the process. The consensus was for them to go ahead with the vendor.

C. ACES Update - Lindsay Dahlheimer

The ACES meeting was canceled and Mrs. Dahlheimer will report back at a later date.

Communications

Mr. Moore reported that both graduation and Project Graduation went well.

Public Comment

- A. In-person public comment**
- B. Remote public comment**

None.

Anticipated Executive Session

- A. Discussion of Superintendent performance (proposed for Executive Session)**

Mr. Mennone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stone, to go into Executive Session and to invite the Superintendent.

In favor of going into Executive Session and inviting the Superintendent to discuss the superintendent's performance: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 10:09 PM.

Adjournment

Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stone, 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 10:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First