

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at 6:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Hurlbert, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone

Board members absent: Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. DelVecchio and Mr. Mennone

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 Development, and Dr. Siegel, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Accountability

Mrs. Dahlheimer called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

(Audio was muffled until 1:54 into the meeting.)

Approval of Agenda

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

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

Presentations

A. CABE Student Leadership Award Recipients - Taryn Adams, Charles Wamester, Carter Fudge and Grace Harkins

Mrs. Gonzalez introduced Taryn Adams and her patients and read why she was recognized for the nomination. She participates year-round in sports and is an excellent trumpet player. As a student, she has produced spectacular results, but wants to understand more than just to get a good grade. She has been a classroom in some sixth-grade art classes.

Mrs. Gonzalez introduced Charles Wamester and his parents and brother. Charlie is a learner who displays the district’s core ethical values. He is a well-rounded student athlete who excels in athletics just as he does in the classroom. He is a dedicated leader with the Unified Sports program. In the classroom, he is the epitome of a team captain and role model. He rises to the challenge of tough course work.

Mrs. Stone introduced Carter Fudge and his parents. Carter has been a positive role model and is motivated, hard-working, genuine and compassionate. He has taken a demanding course load and has been recognized for his academic achievements and as a member of the French Honor Society. He displays strong leadership skills and participates in both music and sports. He volunteered as a camp counselor at Camp Nerden and has been involved in Boy Scouts since he was very young and has earned his Eagle Scout. He was also awarded the Middlefield Lions certificate for exceeding 100 hours of community service.

Mrs. Stone then introduced Grace Harkins and her parents and family. Grace is highly respected by her teachers and peers. She is an enthusiastic learner and was selected by Wesleyan University to participate in their high school scholars' program. By graduation, she will have completed one UCONN EC course and eight AP courses during her high school career. Grace has been inducted into the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. She is a three-season athlete and was captain of the soccer team as well as being a member of the student body government and serving as a class representative. Grace has also been a member of the Student Council. She is a member of EDGE and is devoted to educating students about the dangers of substance abuse. She has also been involved in town clean-ups.

B. CAPSS Superintendent Student Award Recipients - Jake Raney and Margaret Ross

Mrs. Stone introduced Jake Raney and explained that he was chosen because of his strong academic performance, his impeccable character and demonstrated leadership. He has taken a strong honors and AP curriculum and has earned a 4.17 GPA. Jake has been in captain of his basketball, soccer and tennis teams as well as being in the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. He has served as a camp counselor in the summers and has had a part-time job at Lyman Orchards for two years. He is a role model to his peers, both on and off the field, and has consistently demonstrated his genuine, empathetic and compassionate nature.

Mrs. Stone then introduced Maggie Ross and explained that she is a high academic achiever, active member of the school community and a positive young woman. She has consistently challenged herself with honors and AP courses and has earned an overall GPA of 3.81. She has taken on numerous leadership roles and has been a member of the tennis and track teams, serving as captain of the tennis team for two years. She served as vice president of marketing for DECA since she joined in ninth grade and has organized many events as well as placing in the top five at every regional competition. She is also part of the National Honor Society and is the current president of the Spanish Honor Society. Maggie has dedicated many hours to community service organizations, including Benchwarmers, Exchange Club and Lions Club. She has clearly demonstrated her empathy and compassion for others through the kindness and respect she displays every day.

Maggie Ross reported on student life, noting that DECA hosted its ninth annual Mr. Coginchaug where Ian Weissberg was crowned. The Class of 2026 hosted the semi-formal the following night. On April 17th, 25 students were inducted into Coginchaug's chapter of the National Honor Society. Five DECA members attended the 2024 International Career Development Conference in Anaheim from April 26th to May 1st. AP students began exams on May 7th. Students also watched a mock crash put on by the Fire Science and EMT classes. Juniors and seniors had their prom at Water's Edge on May 18th, with over 170 students and guests in attendance. Last Thursday, the annual scholarship night was held and just under \$100,000 was given to graduating seniors. The art show was hosted that same evening. The Spring Sports Banquet was held last night. Final exams start tomorrow and the seniors are very excited to graduate.

Jake Raney reported on athletics, noting that baseball's record was 6-14, with a strong finish. Softball made the Shoreline and State tournaments, with a record of 12-7, and lost to the defending state champions, Coventry. Boys' tennis went 1-10, but Gannon Remillard, a freshman, went 8-2 and received Second Team All-Conference. Girls' tennis qualified for States and all varsity players made Shorelines. Piper Remillard won the Shorelines for the fourth time in a row and ended her career with a 75-0 record.

She was also All-State for the fourth time. Boys' golf finished second in the Shorelines at 10-1 and qualified fifth in the State match. Both girls' and boy's Track and Field teams were very successful. The girls' team finished second in Shorelines and the boys' team finished fourth. The girls' team also finished third in States. Multiple athletes will compete in nationals in about a week and five players qualified for State Opens.

Grace Harkins reported on music, noting that the school musical, Bye Bye Birdie, had leads by Sofia Stephan, Jack Tobin, Sofia Reney and Riley Biro. The Saturday show was canceled due to flooding in the auditorium. Everyone sang and danced one last time in the cafeteria that night. Band and chorus traveled to New York City to compete, with Jack Tobin earning the overall top jazz soloist in his band competition. The CRHS band placed second overall. Five trophies were won in total by band and chorus. Ellie Nick and Rachel Hayward played piano at the Durham Senior Center luncheon on May 22nd. Rachel also completed her Capstone project consisting of an instrumental music piece she composed and the concert band played the piece at the most recent concert. Lastly, the CRHS band and flag twirlers marched in the Memorial Day Parade and then performed the Star-Spangled Banner and some chorus students sang God Bless America. Ryan Fusco and Logan Watts also played taps.

D. BOE Scholarship Recipient - Carter Fudge

Mrs. Stone announced that the BOE Scholarship Committee chose Carter as the recipient. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that Carter has done over 400 hours of community service with Camp Nerden and over 100 hours in his Eagle Scout project. She noted that the board is incredibly proud of Carter.

E. Valedictorian - Diya Patel and Salutatorian - Claire Overton

Mrs. Stone introduced Claire Overton, the Salutatorian. She is graduating with a 4.53 GPA and is pursuing a major in biomedical engineering at UCONN in the fall. Claire has been a member of the softball team for four years and joined the soccer team this year. She became the team's goalie and felt that it was one of her most enjoyable high school experiences.

Mrs. Stone then introduced Diya Patel, the Valedictorian. She is graduating with a 4.65 GPA and is pursuing a major in government on a pre-law track at Georgetown. Her true passion is in government and politics. Diya authored a book, America Starts Local, and created a podcast, Breaking Bounds, to promote youth engagement in government and politics. She served as the president of the Junior Statesmen of America club, DECA, the tennis team and National Honor Society. She was Vice President of the Student Body Government, senior editor of the school newspaper and secretary-general of Model UN.

All of the seniors present announced where they will attend college and their majors.

F. Regional School District 13 Retirees - Karen Balavender, Marcia Croteau, Suzanne Mediavilla and Terri Ryan

Mr. Brough introduced Sue Mediavilla who has served for almost 38 years, with her latest position being the administrative assistant to the athletic director at Coginchaug, Karen Balavender who has served as teaching assistant at Lyman for a total of 27 years, Marcia Croteau who has served as a teaching assistant

at Brewster for the past 17 years, and Terri Ryan, who could not be at the meeting, who has served as a teaching assistant at Brewster for 25 years.

Mrs. Stone reviewed that Sue Mediavilla has been in the district for 38 years, beginning as an instructional aide at Memorial, switching to the library aide at Lyman and moving to the high school to become a library aide. She then moved to a guidance position and on to the athletic department in 2017. Sue is best known for always being ready to help and takes tremendous pride in her job. Her organizational skills, high expectations and big heart will be things that are always remembered.

Mr. Ford reviewed that Karen Balavender joined the district in 1997 and has served as a teaching assistant at John Lyman for 24 years. Karen started in classrooms in grades 3 and 4 and was in kindergarten most recently. Mr. Ford noted that she is exceptionally kind and thoughtful. She always makes a point of saying hello and you rarely see her without a smile. She brings warmth and caring to the classroom and has been an incredible asset to the school. Mr. Ford congratulated her on her retirement and thanked her for all of her contributions.

Mrs. Murray could not be at the meeting tonight, so Mr. Brough reviewed that Marcia Croteau has supported students in the district for 17 years. Most of her time was spent in preschool. She has always gone above and beyond for the students. She approaches all situations with patience, respect and a sense of humor, looking for the positive in everyone. She is the model of professionalism and her creativity, patience and dedication to the job is endless. Marcia has spent her time supporting some of the district's most fragile children and truly cares about each individual child. She soothes and plays with children with a calm demeanor and effortless manner. She has served on the Climate Committee, Sunshine Committee and the district Safety Committee. She always ensures everyone is recognized on their birthday and will be missed.

Mr. Brough reviewed that Terri Ryan has been part of the Brewster School team since 1999. As a kindergarten teaching assistant, she has supported over 400 children. Her firm, but supportive nature has offered a consistent and welcome routine. She has been an active member of the Support Staff union as treasurer and her leadership has been invaluable. Her support in the classroom will be missed by Mrs. Brandt, her long-term teammate. Her strong work ethic in the classroom, along with working with students with varying degrees of needs, is the foundation of successful classrooms. Terri looks forward to spending time with her new granddaughter and visiting her daughter in Chicago. She will be dearly missed by all.

Mr. Brough summarized that these four individuals did a lot of work on behalf of the kids in the background and how important that has been. They were all a real part of the culture of the district and will certainly be missed.

There was a break at this point in the meeting, as all of the honored guests left.

(Upon return to the meeting, the audio was not available from 43:02 to 59:46.)

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

A. In-person public comment

B. Remote public comment**Approval of Minutes**

- A. Board of Education Public Hearing - Plan Amendment - May 1, 2024**
- B. Board of Education Public Hearing - Bonding - May 1, 2024**
- C. Board of Education Special Meeting - May 1, 2024**
- D. Board of Education Annual District Meeting - May 6, 2024**
- E. Board of Education Regular Meeting - May 8, 2024**

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

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Mrs. Hurlbert abstained. Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report**A. Grade Level Reconfiguration 2024-2025 Update**

Dr. Schuch shared that all learner visits to the schools that they will attend in 2024-25 were completed today. All three schools were working on ways to provide some release time for staff who needed additional timer for packing materials. The movers are scheduled for the week of June 17, 2024. He also thanked board members for their willingness to assist in the packing effort.

B. Other Updates (if applicable)

Dr. Schuch reported that Intervention Summer School will run July 8th through July 25th, Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM at Brewster School. There are currently 26 signed up. They also have 56 signed up for Kindergarten Academy that is running during the same time period in three separate sessions. One disappointment was that they can't find staff to run intervention up to grade 5.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if options have been identified for prior intervention students and Dr. Schuch noted that they will send information out next week to families in preK-8, as well as some high school offerings, with links to resources and activities outside of the school environment. Mrs. Quarato added they are working on that information now. Mrs. Dahlheimer was concerned that so many kids are moving buildings next year and now they don't have the offerings available in the summer months that they used to. Mrs. Durkin added that interventionists have been preparing information for the learners to work on over the summer.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if other districts are having staffing issues with summer school and if there might be a co-op option. Mrs. Keane noted that summer school is not mandated. Dr. Schuch added that this is not a funding issue; they just can't find the staffing. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if they have identified why staff do not want to do summer school and Dr. Siegel stated that many teachers are interested in

recharging over the summer. She did feel that the rate of pay is high in the district. A comment was made that there are childcare issues for teachers in the summer.

Dr. Darcy felt it would be possible to cast a wider net as they wouldn't need certified staff and also suggested trying to get faculty from other towns. Dr. Siegel added that they have not considered outside applicants in the past. In 2020, current K-4 learners were invited, but she did not know how many teachers there were. In 2021, K-4 learners were invited and they had eight teachers. In 2022, they had 32 learners in K-2. Last year, 89 K-5 learners were invited, 37 attended, but only one fifth grader. This year, only K-2 was invited.

Mrs. Petrella asked if ESY was still being held as a separate program and Dr. Siegel confirmed that that was happening. Mr. Roraback wondered if there was a conflict with building logistics as well.

Dr. Schuch reported that they received a trophy acknowledging participation in the Special Olympics by the Panamanian team. Mrs. Keane added that it was an amazing experience and the Unified Sports team is looking forward to going to Panama in September. She congratulated Rob Bajoros for coordinating the whole experience.

Dr. Schuch reminded everyone that graduation will be held in a week and invited everyone to attend. It is a rain or shine event.

Staff Reports

A. Director of Finance - Kim Neubig

Mrs. Neubig reported that they finished May 2024 YTD with 85 percent expended, 100 percent encumbered with 89 percent of revenue received. They are finalizing closing out the year and will report back again at the next meeting.

Mrs. Neubig stated that there will be different bus numbers and different times in the Fall. They want to give parents enough time to prepare. They are busy routing buses now. They have received positive feedback on the propane buses as well.

B. District Climate Committee Update - Jen Keane

Mrs. Dahlheimer explained that she and Mrs. Petrella have been meeting with the District Climate Committee. Mrs. Keane reported that all schools have been working diligently on fostering the district's core ethical values. A list of improvements has been put into a grid. Office referrals, bus referrals, absences, truanancies, suspensions and complaints have all been reported. The team regularly talks about the disciplinary issues at Strong and they are working on using restorative practices. There was only one report filed using the online system. Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that they had looked at ways for students to report incidents or concerns last year. She wondered if students don't want to report incidents or if the district is not meeting the needs of the anonymous reporting and hoped to work on that over the summer. Mrs. Gonzalez added that they have students email them directly with any issues.

Mr. Moore asked what the criteria is for office referral and Mrs. Keane explained that it is school-based. Any physical altercation, swearing or disruption to the educational environment would all result in an

office referral and they do track the type of incidence. Dr. Darcy asked if they segregated the data by how many students are represented, how many occurrences they have and what type of issue. Mrs. Keane explained that each building keeps that data and Dr. Darcy noted that that would be informative for the board to have. Mrs. Keane has that type of data for suspensions. Dr. Schuch explained that referrals are what people think happened and sometimes turns out to be not what actually happened. Dr. Darcy stated she would like to see the data for any time a consequence is given by the office. Mrs. Keane noted that she is required by the state to keep track of suspensions.

Mr. Roraback noted that there has been a lot of attention on the "Wait Until 8th" program about cellphones. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that the state has mandated that the district have a District Climate Committee comprised of staff, students, and parents by July 1, but they have yet to receive guidance from Shipman on a policy.

Mrs. Keane asked Dr. Darcy specifically what data she would be looking for and Dr. Darcy would like to see how many students who have received a consequence from the office are repeat offenders or just one time, how many are more than five, more than 10, and what the nature of the offense is. Mrs. Keane felt that that is what happens at the individual schools' climate meetings and she hopes to get that information reported to her as well. Dr. Darcy did not want anyone to assume that they know who the offenders are. Mrs. Gonzalez added that the offenders at Strong are predominantly in eighth grade, with mostly repeat offenders and they do have a lot of procedures in place, including restorative practices. She felt it was important for students to understand they made a mistake but there are consequences. Mr. Ford added that teachers are inviting conversations to work with the students instead of just writing referrals.

Mrs. Keane went on to describe the Climate Committee's work, noting that the social worker has been in four out of five buildings this year.

Committee Reports

A. Policy Committee Meeting - May 15, 2024

Mr. Moore reported that the committee met earlier tonight and worked on the 5000 series. They still have some remaining and need to spend more time on student dress and nonresident students.

B. Building Committee Meeting - May 15, 2024

Mr. Moore reported that the Building Committee also met earlier tonight. There is a drainage issue on the corner of Pickett Lane and Maiden Lane and engineers will be working on that. He reminded everyone to vote on the referendum question next Tuesday. They hope to begin installing bathrooms at the fieldhouse soon. Installing two bathrooms would then allow them to be able to put the lights in. The turf replacement will start right after graduation. There is also a drainage problem at both the baseball and softball fields that will be fixed by installing a warning track with drainage. It has been posted and published that the track will be closed.

C. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - May 22, 2024

Mrs. Petrella reported that they discussed the fifth- and sixth-grade master schedule which will be talked about later in this meeting. They also reviewed and discussed student data and the link to that data has

been sent to everyone on the board. They reviewed SAT scores, iReady reading for grades 6 through 8, iReady math for grades K through 8 and EL assessments. The DIBELS and NGSS data was available, but not discussed in-depth. SAT results showed that numbers are declining slightly after COVID which mirrors state scores. A lot of time in high school algebra is spent working on skills that students should already know. They are planning a new curriculum cycle in math, personalized professional development for staff and some work on developing play lists and pre-assessments. They do need to address math content that may have been missed and an increase in math time is scheduled for sixth-graders. iReady testing is being phased out and was only done in grades 6 through 8 for reading. DIBELS is being used in its place. Overall achievement scores are dropping slightly or staying the same but have not yet reached pre-COVID levels. This was the first year for EL assessments and not all grade levels take all five assessments and not every child takes every assessment. Benchmark assessments are more competency-based and the goal is to see movement which is being seen.

Dr. Schuch noted that they intend to start up again in August, going back to in-person meetings. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that they may need to change the start time of the meetings.

Board Communications and Professional Development

Mrs. Dahlheimer reported that they received a list of all the year-end events in the district and she and Mr. Moore have been attending as many as possible. She played a quick video from their time with the group from Panama at Special Olympics. Mr. Moore added that it shows the importance of global connections.

New Business

A. Discussion on 2024-2025 Master Schedule Changes for Strong and Memorial

Mrs. Dahlheimer explained that there have been some pretty significant changes in the master schedule that may change how curriculum is presented.

Dr. Schuch noted that a formal presentation on the master schedule was made at the Student Achievement meeting. Mrs. Dahlheimer explained that some of the concerns were that they wanted to make sure that the spirit of science and social studies stays intact. Mrs. Durkin explained that the new schedule is how elementary schools operate these days. She provided sample fourth- and fifth-grade student schedules for the board, resembling an elementary model that includes time to build connections, relationships and work on social-emotional learning. One purpose for doing this is to have one building under one model. Currently, two grades follow the elementary model and one follows an ad-hoc middle school model. These schedules try for about two hours a day of ELA. The EL program naturally embeds a lot of transitions and movement and they do not sit for two hours. The teachers would like to have the module taught in one-hour sessions and the all-block in another. Almost every child at Memorial gets breakfast every day and the classrooms have a soft start for social time. Mrs. Durkin wants that to continue for both grades.

There is about an hour of math every day. As in a K-4 classroom, science and social studies alternate, depending on the unit. The fourth-grade schedule has between 25 and 45 minutes of science or social studies a day while the fifth-grade schedule has one day of no social studies because of having health, but they then go from 40 to 60 minutes of science or social studies a day. Mrs. Durkin also included shared

read-aloud and class meetings in the schedule. Both grade levels have town meetings and related arts. Elementary classes end before the school day ends and that is taken into account as well. There is also time for band and enrichment on both schedules.

Mr. Moore asked if there was time for play or recess. Mrs. Durkin explained that they are included in the schedule. Play for grades 2-5 has been legislated. Dr. Darcy was happy to see the flexibility in the schedule. Mrs. Durkin noted that the students will not change teachers in these schedules. They have had discussions about combining time for students in different classes. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that there is a reduction in social studies and asked if they can meet the current pacing guide with this schedule. Mrs. Durkin did not feel there was a reduction, by any means. Part of the problem with the current schedule is they wanted to increase instructional time in math. When switching classes, the 45 minutes was maybe 38. Social studies has not been eliminated and the curriculum was taught, as far as Mrs. Durkin knows. Mrs. Durkin explained that Open Studio block did not work out the way they had hoped. She has the utmost respect for the teachers and believes them when they say the curriculum was covered. Mrs. Dahlheimer explained that she was not judging or questioning the teachers.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if the teachers had what they need to teach what is in the pacing guide. She did not like that parents see the pacing guides and find that their kids are not meeting those levels. They want to make sure that the kids are learning what they are supposed to in the ways they are supposed to. Based on the concerns with the fifth-grade schedule this year, it is very hard for the board to grasp a giant change in the sixth-grade schedule. They have asked about social studies all year in Student Achievement meetings. Mrs. Dahlheimer did not want to keep experimenting with different options.

Mr. Moore asked if they really need science and social studies every other day and Mrs. Durkin explained that what typically happens is they shift off between science and social studies for a few weeks or a month.

Mrs. Hurlbert asked about the Strong related arts schedule and saw that sixth-graders will have related arts two days a week instead of four and not for 80 minutes, but for 51. She also asked about the level of input that the related arts teachers had in developing the schedule. Mrs. Gonzalez explained that the sixth-grade team wanted it every day, with some of them preferring shorter periods. She added that it is more of an elementary model in sixth grade. At Memorial, they get 600 minutes a week of ELA and then get 200 at Strong which is a huge drop-off. At Memorial, they get 300 minutes of math and then get 200 at Strong. This new schedule increases those times. Mrs. Gonzalez felt that it was important for sixth-graders to get basic skills. Mrs. Gonzalez explained that she spoke with the teachers, but not in a formal process.

Mrs. Hurlbert asked about kids who receive intervention, etc. and whether they will still get that in their classes or will they be pulled from the blocks. Mrs. Gonzalez felt that students would be pulled in the afternoon. Mrs. Hurlbert noted that it is not the board's job to create the schedule or tell teachers how to teach, but the board's job is to manage policy for operation of the district and establish a strategic plan for continuing academic success. They also have the job of adopting sound curriculum and hire the superintendent to execute the policies and make sure the district is reaching its goals. Policy says that class sizes should be between 21 and 25 and if you take the 118 students that are coming up from fifth grade, that would be 29.5 students in each of the four classrooms. Mrs. Hurlbert felt that was too many kids in related arts and she is concerned about that. Up until recently, Mrs. Hurlbert felt that there was a process for when changes to curriculum would come about and the board would weigh in on that. She

was happy to hear that the math department would be doing a curricular review soon. There is nothing on the website about how curriculum is reviewed and approved. Mrs. Hurlbert felt that the board needs to talk about changes made in the curriculum in order to move in the same direction. Data has shown that one of the best indicators for student achievement was the teacher and if the district's teachers don't feel like their voices are being heard, they will leave. She asked that the Policy Committee look at the state guidelines for curriculum review and look at other districts as well.

Mrs. Hurlbert asked Dr. Schuch how they will evaluate the efficacy of the proposed schedule. Mrs. Petrella asked Mrs. Durkin if all students take band and, if not, what do the students do during band time if they don't participate. Mrs. Durkin felt that essentially all fourth graders take band, but the students not taking band rotate between teachers' classes. She felt that there may be 20 students who don't take band. Service providers try to find the time that would least impact instructional time for students. Lunch and recess are the busiest times for counselors, etc.

Mrs. Petrella suggested that teachers can mix and match groups into different classrooms. Mrs. Durkin stated that all five teachers will not be teaching the same subject at the same time every day due to the related arts schedule. The teachers do a lot of planning and collaborating together.

Mrs. Dahlheimer went on to the sixth-grade schedule with three 80-minute blocks for the core subjects and asked how special education weighs in on that and if they had any concerns. She also asked if teachers have had any concerns about the retention for social studies with switching halfway through the year to science. Mrs. Gonzalez stated that it is a model that is used frequently in sixth grade and mentioned that Guilford does that. She added that there are 117 students coming up to sixth grade, with 33 of them identified, that doesn't include students who get intervention or other services. Those students would be pulled out, but still have some related arts. Dr. Schuch stated that a sixth-grade teacher has been added for the core content areas so that class sizes would be in the policy range.

Mr. Moore reviewed that an effort was made to focus in on the STEAM program and it seems like it's now only two quarters in sixth grade. He felt that the district is no longer focusing on that. Mrs. Gonzalez argued that sixth grade is more of an elementary model, but have more opportunity for that in seventh and eighth grade. Dr. Schuch felt that was a fair question but noted that the total amount of instructional time for science and history is not changing in this model. He also stated that the M in STEAM is math and they have made a deliberate effort to increase math instruction which is the gatekeeper for all science offerings. He did not feel that the schedule shows any less commitment to STEAM than the current schedule. Dr. Schuch added that both Mrs. Gonzalez and Mrs. Durkin inherited situations that could be improved. He added that they don't know if this new schedule will be perfect and they will have to wait and see. The focus is an increased commitment to math and language arts.

Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that there are certain things that the board expects from the middle school. The amount of social-emotional learning that the sixth graders got from the cooking elective was so important. She felt that that type of learning can still happen while they prioritize ELA and math. Mrs. Dahlheimer is also concerned about STEAM, science and social studies.

Mrs. Hurlbert asked if money was available to pay teachers for curriculum development over the summer and Dr. Siegel confirmed that they were doing that.

Mr. Moore noted that they have been focused on math scores and more may be needed in seventh and eighth grade as well. Dr. Schuch stated that they didn't feel it was appropriate to make that big a change in one year. Mr. Roraback felt that math can be emphasized in a hands-on way as well. Mrs. Petrella asked that the board get an update in November or December about how the changes were going. Mrs. Dahlheimer emphasized that they do not want to end up in a situation like this year when the schedule had to be changed mid-year because it wasn't working.

Mrs. Hurlbert reiterated that she would like Dr. Schuch to explain what data will be used to determine the success of the schedule change. Mrs. Durkin felt that she could at least get an anecdotal piece from teachers. Mrs. Gonzalez added that students are in class for 70-minute periods right now and didn't feel that 80 minutes would make that much of a difference. Teachers may prefer shorter periods, but 45 minutes is a lot less and teachers revert to a "stand and deliver" type of teaching. There was some discussion about how social studies has been taught in the past vs. now with the EL program.

Mr. Moore thanked the administrators for their explanations and reiterated that their concern is to be on track to get students ready for school and graduation. The district is losing so many kids after eighth grade and they hope to have them look at Coginchaug as the place they need to be. Mrs. Durkin agreed that the curriculum needs to be updated and communication is important. Mrs. Petrella also felt it was important that major changes get run by the board before they go out to students and parents.

B. Coginchaug Academy

Mrs. Hurlbert commented that there were board members who did not know what Coginchaug Academy was and she asked Mrs. Dahlheimer to reach out for an explanation. Mrs. Keane explained that it came about when Mr. Falcone was in the district. Their vision was to create an alternative to outplacement of kids in different circumstances. It included a shortened school day, with a job in the morning or afternoon. Everyone in the Academy is a special education student and is literally a type of programming for kids with IEPs. There is a social-emotional learning component to it as well. There are currently four students (two eighth-graders and two high school students) enrolled in the Cog Academy using virtual learning and specialized learning. The hope was to provide the least restrictive environment for students so that they can attend high school as tolerated.

Mr. Moore added that the district saved a significant amount of money by avoiding outplacement of these students. Mrs. Petrella felt that this program is a result of Dr. Veronesi's initiative to bring students back into the district. Mrs. Keane emphasized that it needed to have a different title because there were eighth graders registered. Coginchaug Academy is fully self-contained at the high school and the eighth graders are no longer in Strong at all. Mrs. Keane explained that graduation requirements are the same for all students. She added that the students do not participate in extracurricular or school events at Strong School, but that could be possible. Dr. Schuch emphasized how important it is to keep the students in the district, above and beyond the money. Mrs. Keane added that the program can accept kids from other districts, but they have not done that.

Mrs. Dahlheimer could not find the program in any policies or regulations. Mrs. Keane added that the Life Skills program doesn't exist in that either and it is just part of Special Education programming. Mrs. Keane volunteered to come to a future meeting to discuss this further.

C. Discussion and Possible Vote to Amend 2024-2025 Goals and Objectives

Mrs. Dahlheimer will get the revised wording and submit the goals and objectives.

D. Policy Review

1. Second read and possible vote on series 9000 (part 2)

- a. Construction of the Agenda 9323
- b. Construction and Posting of Agenda - Shipman
- c. Duties of the Chairperson 9210
- d. Official Duties - Chairperson - Shipman
- e. Duties of the Secretary and Treasurer 9211
- f. Official Duties - Secretary - Shipman
- g. Official Duties - Treasurer - Shipman
- h. Official Duties - Vice Chairperson - Shipman
- I. Electronic Participation at Board Meetings 9327
- j. Meeting Conduct - Shipman
- k. Roberts Rules of Order 9320
- l. Quorum 9367
- m. Quorum and Voting Procedures - Shipman
- n. Actions by the Board 9325
- o. Meetings - Public and Executive Session 9322
- p. Public Meetings and Executive Session - Shipman
- q. Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings 9120
- r. Minutes of the BOE Meetings 9326
- s. Minutes - Shipman
- t. Notice of Meetings 9321
- u. Time, Place and Notice of Meetings - Shipman
- v. Regular Meetings of the Board of Education 9261.1
- w. Organizational Meeting of the BOE 9100
- x. Officers - Shipman
- y. Removal of Board Officers - Shipman
- z. Transaction of Business - Shipman
- aa. Filling Vacancies of Board of Education 9111
- bb. Filling Vacancies - Shipman
- cc. Limits of Authority Board Members 9010
- dd. Methods of Operation 9300
- ee. Number of Board of Education Members 9110
- ff. Oath of Office - Shipman
- gg. Orientation of Board Members 9230
- hh. Remuneration and Reimbursement 9250
- ii. Reimbursement of Board Member Expenses - Shipman

Mr. Moore did a quick review of the above-listed policies.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Dr. Darcy, to adopt the above-listed policies.

In favor of adopting the above-listed policies: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Hurlbert, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion carried unanimously.

- 2. First read on series 5000 (part 1)**
 - a. Video Cameras on Buses and in Facilities 5145
 - b. Uniform Treatment of Recruiters 5230
 - c. Transportation 5541
 - d. Suicide Prevention and Intervention - Shipman
 - e. Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention 5141.28
 - f. Confidentiality and Access to Education Records 5125
 - g. Student Records (PPRA) - Shipman
 - h. Smoking 5131.7
 - I. Pledge of Allegiance - Shipman

Mr. Moore reviewed all proposed changes, additions and deletions to the above-listed policies. Mrs. Hurlbert complimented Mrs. Maloney on her impeccable job with the policies.

Public Comment

A. In-person public comment

None.

B. Remote public comment

None.

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: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Hurlbert, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First