

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

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

Board members absent: None

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

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

Dr. Taylor asked to move item 11 to in front of item 9 and Dr. Friedrich and Mrs. Boyle accepted the change.

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

Public Comment

A member of the public stated that the budget shows projected class sizes of grades K-6, but only shows enrollment for the remaining grades. He has asked for this information for several years.

Christian Gonzalez thanked the District and the staff at Coginchaug in particular for their reaction to the recent events. However, he wanted to stress the importance of focusing on the well-being of the students by supporting music and arts. He feels that without music and the arts, the students will not feel connected to their school, to each other and to the staff.

Mike and Betsy Zito have lived in town for 45 years, their children went through the school system and now they have five grandchildren in the system. Mrs. Zito asked how the Board will protect her grandchildren so they are not shot like the children in Florida. Mr. Zito stated that he picks up his grandchildren from sports camp and just walks in the back door. Mrs. Zito also felt the buzzers are useless. Mrs. Zito stated that she wants her grandchildren protected regardless of the cost.

Administrator Welcome

Debra Stone, principal at Memorial School, reported that they had a kindness day at Memorial in the middle of February inspired by one of their students and held by the Wellness and Safety Committee. The student, Paige Kaliszewski, shared her interest in the movie, "Wonder". The themes in the story include kindness, courage and friendship.

Mrs. Stone explained that the school watched the movie, Wonder, and then broke out into multi-aged community groups that were led by 11 adults. These groups talked about what makes a good friend, how to show tolerance and recognize that everyone is different.

Mrs. Stone also reported that Memorial students participated in their first unified sports event today in Berlin. She felt that the basketball event was absolutely amazing. She also thanked Mrs. DiMaggio for the curriculum event that was held on March 1st and reported that over 200 people attended.

Mr. Moore echoed Mrs. Stone's comments about the curriculum night and also reported that Coginchaug's girls' basketball team is headed to Mohegan Sun to play for the State championship.

Next Board Meeting - April 4, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School

Board of Education Recognition

Dr. Veronesi thanked the Board for their hard work and noted that March is Board of Education recognition month. The Board members were presented with a Hershey bar and a magnet. Dr. Veronesi recognized the Board's enthusiasm and courage in the addressing the work ahead.

Update of Durham and Middlefield Budgets: First Selectmen Laura Francis and Ed Bailey

Laura Francis explained that Durham's 2018-2019 is still under construction and will not go to public hearing until April 2nd. They start the budget process with three simple goals: try to keep the mill rate the same or not be increased by more than one-half a point; try to continue to fund long-range plans (capital improvements, fleet replacement and building maintenance); and try to maintain current or better level of service.

Mrs. Francis reviewed some of the program and capital improvement needs, including the desire and/or need for additional police coverage. Though Mrs. Francis has tried every year, she has been unable to get an additional Trooper past the Board of Finance. She also strongly encouraged the Board to consider adding a Student Resource Officer. Public safety communication infrastructure and equipment is aging and first responders can't respond without the proper communications system. Durham is fortunate to have an expert in this field, but the equipment is aging. Mrs. Francis reminded everyone that the 911 call center is a regional engagement with Valley Shore, but explained that the cost for that service for the town is pushing \$100,000.

Mrs. Francis also mentioned aging and failing culverts and parts of the drainage system that have a high cost of replacement. Three culverts alone will probably cost about \$3 million. Guardrails need upgrading and other various road maintenance needs to be done. Almost every department in town has technology needs. Mrs. Francis did report that all of the approvals are in place and water is coming to Durham, but that will also require funding an expanded water company.

Mrs. Francis continued by explaining that there is a desire or need for professional economic development services because the Grand List is not increasing. She also stated that she desperately hopes the town will approve the acquisition of Korn School for renovation to a community center. There are also plans to improve the town's public safety complex.

Mrs. Francis showed a pie graph, illustrating how Durham spends its money. She reviewed the individual areas where money is spent. She also included some information about staffing and mentioned that most Town Hall departments are staffed by one person and a lot of positions have been combined. Public Works has been reorganized and now includes a road foreman, a crew leader mechanic, three maintainer 2s, two maintainer 1s and a laborer. The library is staffed by 11 people, with only four being full-time. Mrs. Francis brought up staffing as it is normally the biggest cost of any organization and wanted to show how they are managing those costs. In the last five years, wage increases have ranged between 1.75 percent and 2.75 percent. All new hires and those not vested in the defined benefit plan were switched to a 401A retirement plan. All employees are on an HSA for health insurance. The Town of Durham is currently in union contract negotiations for everything but retirement.

Mrs. Francis reviewed that the town's fund balance is hovering around 12 percent, but pointed out that in 2011/2012 it was lowered down to 6.45 percent when they had to replace the salt shed that collapsed. It has taken five years to build that fund balance back up and they did that by no longer using the fund balance to minimize budget increases. Mrs. Francis feels that the fund balance is at the right level and will help them to get competitive rates on bonding.

Mrs. Francis reviewed that the Grand List has decreased and any increases have been in personal property and motor vehicle, not in real estate. She then reviewed the incremental increases in the mill rate and went on to review the proposed decreases from the state and what they will mean to the towns.

Mrs. Francis apologized if they seemed a little aggressive the last time they met with the Board of Education and reiterated that they are all in this together with common goals. She summarized that big decisions have to be made sooner rather than later and she would like to be a partner in that with the Board of Education. She thanked the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance for their passion and hard work.

Mr. Moore asked if she had heard anything about next year's State budget and Mrs. Francis stated that she had spoken with Senator Fasano who believes that the 10-year plan has been adjusted to be reset to the Governor's hold back levels. She has also heard that the transportation budget is a challenge and grant opportunities will probably disappear and the only money available will be tied to federal money. She also explained that CCM and COST are looking to get the minimum budget requirement reset. The new ECS formula is not good for Durham or Middlefield.

Ed Bailey started by reviewing the ECS numbers and reiterated that the hold backs are going to become the new norm. He also added that they continue to talk to the legislators about relief on ECS funding as well as on the MBR requirements. They are also looking to use an average for ADM and stressed how important it is to have a stable mill rate.

Mr. Bailey stated that he presented his proposed budget last Thursday and reported that he was able to decrease municipal expenses by \$226,000. He explained that Town Hall operates with three full-time employees and the Highway Department has five full-time employees. All other positions are part-time, with no medical benefits. He also explained that Middlefield has a very robust capital plan and funding for that was maintained.

Mr. Bailey also explained that STEAP funding will probably never come back and ICE grants (for regional entities) have disappeared as well. The last reval in Middlefield produced about a 5 percent

decrease in the Grand List and it is up approximately 1.5 percent this year. Mr. Bailey was encouraged by the water line coming into Durham and the potential for a gas line coming through.

Mr. Bailey explained that, due to the switch in enrollment, education costs have increased by \$177,000 which was offset by the decrease in expenses, with a net result of a .3 mill rate decrease, from 34.96 to 34.66. Middlefield's undesignated fund will be maintained at about 11 percent. He also mentioned that the District will get better bonding rates when both towns have a healthy fund balance.

Mr. Bailey also reported that Middlefield has received one TAR payment and the other is in abeyance because the State needs to borrow the money to pay it and is unable to borrow any money at this time. Middlefield does fund road improvements at \$75,000 per year, but it is still inadequate. He agreed with Laura Francis in that they are working hard with the legislature to maintain and improve funding. There is not much more that can be taken out of the budget without having serious impact on the level of services.

Mr. Bailey stated that Middlefield prides itself on their Park and Recreation programs as well as education and maintaining town services. Both Durham and Middlefield are anticipating joining the Middletown Area Transit to provide public transportation. Tax relief has also fallen to the towns to provide.

Mrs. Boyle asked about the population in Middlefield and Mr. Bailey reported it was approximately 4,400. The total budget is \$4,691,000, which includes the \$177,000 increase due to enrollment switching to Middlefield. Mrs. Francis explained that Durham's population is about 7,400 and expects her net budget to be a little bit under \$7 million. Mr. Moore asked about the enrollment numbers and Mr. Bailey explained that it would require legislation to average out the numbers over a five-year period.

2018-2019 Regional School District 13 Budget

A. Technology

Ken Pietrasko reported that they had deployed 50 HP laptops to teachers and staff, added 16 Epson interactive projectors with wireless display adaptors, 500+ new Chromebooks for seventh, eighth and ninth grade, updated and repaired almost 800 Chromebooks to service students at Brewster, Lyman and Memorial, replaced 75 aging iPads, added a Chromebase lab to Lyman, replaced the music and photo labs at the high school, upgraded firewall capabilities, expanded security cameras and added a higher-capacity recording server.

They have also added E-collect forms and revamped all report cards. They are adding online student registration for kindergarten and hope to extend that to all grades. Keeping cost in mind, they are rolling out a black and white initiative and an ID badge must be scanned to print color. They have updated the camera recording software and can have increased retention time. They have also updated the website and will continue to roll that out to all of the schools.

Mr. Pietrasko went on to review next year's needs, including replacing the wireless access points with newer higher capacity ones and moving forward with the Chromebook initiative at the high school and Strong. Google has announced a Chromebook auto-update policy which means that the District will need to purchase new Chromebooks for Brewster, Lyman and Memorial in order to ensure they are compatible

with the SBAC testing browser. They are also planning to continue with the interactive projector implementation at the high school and Memorial as well as replacing the desktops with Windows 10 desktops in the business lab at the high school.

Mr. Pietrasko explained that the majority of the items, with the exception of the Chromebooks, end up in the district-wide technology lease. The anticipated yearly payment is \$47,000 which is less than the payment drop-off of \$60,000 from the 2013-2017 lease. Many of the Chromebooks do not age out until the end of the 2019-2020 school year. He is suggesting replacing one quarter of the Chromebook fleet at Memorial, Brewster and Lyman per year which will ease the District into the new costs to keep the Chromebooks current. Memorial, Brewster and Lyman have Chromebooks on carts.

Mr. Pietrasko reviewed that in June of 2011, there were no Chromebooks and barely any Wi-Fi capacity with mostly desktops in the District. Security cameras were being piloted and projectors were on carts. The Chromebooks program began in 2014 and is now at almost 1,300 now. There is also a bring-your-own-device initiative in the District and wireless is available for use. The staff now has about 95 laptops, but there are still a significant amount of desktops in the District. All equipment is maintained by the IT department, with help during the summer and networking is outsourced. The IT department has five staff members.

Dr. Taylor asked about the bandwidth being used by cell phones and Mr. Pietrasko stated that cell phones log into the guest network which is metered and doesn't get as much bandwidth and has stricter content filtering. Mr. Yamartino asked if the Chromebooks were thin clients and Mr. Pietrasko explained that they only run Google operating systems and are restricted to only be logged in with an rsd13.org account and can only use Google for Education tools. The staff laptops are full-service laptops. He also reviewed some of the costs and requirements associated with thin clients.

Dr. Veronesi thanked Mrs. Francis and Mr. Bailey for coming and explaining their budget issues. She also reported that she and Mrs. Neubig met with Mrs. Francis, Mr. Bailey, Sergeant Burns and three Resident Troopers last Wednesday to talk about safety and security.

B. Music

Dr. Veronesi commented that the .5 reduction in a music position has garnered a lot of attention and emotion and she wanted to be sure that everyone understood how much they value music education in the District. The proposal was made keeping declining enrollment in mind, involvement in music and looking at people's schedules. They did not believe that this reduction would have a negative and lasting impact on the music program. Dr. Veronesi also addressed a comment that had been made about the age of the guitars at the high school and explained that they are two years old and were selected by the music teachers. She also addressed a comment about the scheduling of the Select Chorus at the middle school and explained that the schedule was made to accommodate the musical at the high school and the musical at Strong and parents were aware of the schedule at the beginning of the school year.

C. Safety/Security

Since the last Board meeting, there was an incident at the high school involving safety and security. Dr. Veronesi acknowledged the collaboration and support of the Central Office team, the First Selectmen,

Board of Education, the attorneys, the Resident Trooper and Troop F. She also acknowledged the students and parents involved.

Dr. Veronesi also pointed out that the fund balance of the Board's budget has been used to offset the budget impact for subsequent years and this year's fund balance is close to \$1 million. The majority of that is due to surplus in insurance and salary. She asked the Board to consider whether or not some of this surplus could be used toward some of these things and capital needs that have been identified. This would allow for an SRO to be added to the budget while maintaining the proposed 0 percent increase.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the school security monitor at the high school has a salary of \$25,000 and to add another person for the remainder of the year would not be more than \$6,000. That second person would not be continued next year as the hope would be to have a school resource officer in the budget. They had also talked about special duty officers as needed and, in fact, did add four days of up to three officers a day last week, at cost of \$11,640. In talking with Sergeant Burns, the salary for an SRO would range from \$90,000 to \$140,000 for 180 days. Dr. Veronesi would recommend beginning the hiring process this year, if the Board supports this.

Dr. Veronesi did remind the Board that, in 2015, she had proposed an SRO that would be shared with Durham. Durham would like to use the same officer, but with a completely separate contract for the summer months, evenings and days when there is no school.

Dr. Veronesi moved on to discuss visible signage at the schools identifying the different parts of the schools, at an estimated cost of \$20,000. Another recommendation was to have each of the windows numbered from the outside. In order to receive state reimbursement for the vestibule system, the glass would need to be blast- and ballistic-proof and should be done in all buildings. This is a lengthy process and would be reimbursed at 52.2 percent, with the total cost being \$1.2 million. The net cost would be \$593,000. Window film can also be used, but would not completely sustain the force of gunfire. It has been also suggested that the window film be installed on all of the windows in all five schools, for a total of \$50,000.

Moving to the kiosk system, the start-up costs for all schools would be \$53,000, with \$10,000 for hardware and wiring. There is an annual cost of \$13,500 to maintain the kiosk system. Upgrading the buzzer station would include monitors at people's desks and cameras outside.

Dr. Veronesi reminded the Board that they had received \$22,000 reimbursement and she felt that \$11,000 of it should be spent on the special duty officers. She suggested that the remaining amount be used to hire the additional security monitor for the high school. She also put a \$5,000 placeholder in for professional development with regard to security. The District has created a protocol and a calendar that lists the all the required drills. Some revisions do need to be done in the safety and security manual. Regarding student support and well-being, the District does work with the local wellness coalition and has gotten some critical information from surveys that were done.

Mrs. Boyle asked about classroom doors and Dr. Veronesi stated that a lot of the doors here were changed to thumb latches after Sandy Hook. Mr. Augur agreed that there are some inexpensive changes that could be made.

Mr. Moore had asked Dr. Veronesi if students felt frightened about the increased police presence in the buildings. She reported that a few high school teachers gathered information from close to 100 students and there was not one student who reported a negative feeling about having a police officer in the building. A member of the public agreed and Dr. Friedrich also commented that it makes the grandparents feel better too. Mr. Moore stated that virtually every student thanked him for being at the door. Dr. Veronesi also noticed that students wanted to talk to the Troopers. A student felt that it was necessary to have the protection there.

Dr. Veronesi also stated that she would like to have an SRO on the team and reported that on Thursday, March 5th, she made or received 45 phone calls and got close to 100 texts and 48 emails between 6:00 and 11:30 PM. She also explained that an SRO is not there just for the kind of situation that occurred last week and would be available for so much more. The SRO would also be someone who could be involved in DARE classes and be present at all the schools in the District, while primarily being located at the high school and middle school.

Mrs. Boyle stated that she is all for an SRO, but also feels that one person traveling from school to school almost gives a false sense of security. Having someone in the building is a real sense of security. She wondered if it might be better to hire a security officer in all of the buildings instead of one State Trooper. She also challenged the idea of hiring an SRO for 180 days when the District has summer school with kids and adults in the buildings.

Dr. Veronesi explained that this had not been part of the original budget presentation and that she had been advised that, based on the District's history, it would be best to start with a school resource officer primarily housed at the high school. She would personally like an SRO in the District. Mrs. Boyle would also like to have a dollar line item for mental health support as well. Dr. Veronesi did not feel that safety and security is just about an active aggressor and the mental health piece and student support is throughout the budget. Dr. Veronesi suggested that the District start with an SRO and use that person's expertise to recommend anything further.

Mr. Moore commented that the vestibule upgrades would probably need to be bonded and Mrs. Neubig stated that there is some surplus money to do that with. Mr. Moore thought that the cost would be spread out over five to 10 years, if bonded, and would allow for most of the improvements to be made sooner than later.

Mrs. Geraci agreed with Mrs. Boyle and stated how important it is to get to the cause of these actions. She would like to see more money go towards a different type of mental health counselor to identify high-risk students. Dr. Taylor completely agreed and also hoped that the school psychologists are talking to each one of the students during the school year. He also stated that the average school shooting takes six minutes and if the SRO was at the high school, he would not be able to get to another building in time. He agreed with Mrs. Boyle that it would be better to spend money to have someone in every school. Mrs. Neubig commented that the SRO is also there to help identify students at risk. Dr. Veronesi explained that the District is always thinking about mental health issues and addressing that through several programs, the most important of which is having teachers and administrators who students and parents trust.

Mrs. Boyle commented that school resource officers cost much less money when they are town officers, not State Police, and that is why she would challenge the Board to look into options. Mrs. Neubig stated

that she had asked the State Troopers if the District could have armed guards and the answer was that the District is under contract with the State Police. Mrs. Neubig summarized that the range of salary was because of years of service and that all incidentals were included in the numbers.

Mr. Falcone explained that the biggest adjustment he had to make when coming to District 13 was not having an SRO. He feels that an SRO is a resource to make the school and the District safer. He felt that having an SRO would take care of the parking issues and also mentioned that kids talk to SROs about things they won't tell other people. What he misses the most about the SRO is getting the Monday report about what went on over the weekend. Mr. Falcone also commented on how difficult it is to talk to Troop F about minor issues. He explained that an SRO is very different from a security or hall monitor and commented on what a tremendous difference the police presence makes for the students.

Dr. Veronesi reiterated that an SRO would be a multifaceted way to address these issues and continue to move forward. Mr. Moore asked Dr. Veronesi to put together some of the options and how they affect the budget. Mrs. Neubig did have that information available, depending on what options the Board chose. She reviewed that bonding would be possible or they could, in fact, use some of the surplus from this year's fund balance as well as delay some capital expenditures. If all of the options were to be done in the 2018-2019 budget, it would increase the budget by 1.85 percent. As for the SRO, that salary could be absorbed this year. For next year, that would increase the budget by .45 percent for 180 days. She reviewed several of the options and how they could be funded.

Mrs. Neubig reported that the District is fortunate to have a surplus of approximately \$900,000, including savings in various areas. Last year, the District ended the school year with a \$523,000 surplus. The differences are clearly identifiable and are mostly due to salaries. Mrs. Neubig outlined several possible uses for the surplus.

Mrs. Boyle asked if the budget funds the salary line item at 100 percent when last year was so much lower than expected. Mrs. Neubig explained that the budget was based on actual head count and then reduced by \$200,000 for next year. This year's budget was based on actual head count less \$100,000.

Mr. Yamartino stated that the budget was approved by the taxpayers based on the numbers that were presented and he is a little nervous about moving money for other things during the fiscal year. He also stated that any surplus is to completely revert back to the towns, under state law. Mrs. Neubig explained that the fund balance is zeroed out by applying the money to the following year. Mr. Yamartino would like to have a separate full Board meeting to delve into these issues. He also felt that these issues need public input and could, in fact, be a separate line item on the referendum.

D. General Discussion

Dr. Veronesi hoped that the Board could decide on priorities as far as safety and security at the next meeting and the only other item that needs to be decided on is the .5 music position. It was agreed to hold a special meeting on March 21st to review these issues. Dr. Friedrich asked for the information to be forwarded to the Board members prior to the meeting.

Superintendent's Report: Progress Towards Strategic Coherence Goals and the Strategic Visioning Process

Dr. Veronesi reported that there have only been 12 school days since the last update. In the area of student achievement, the first STEAM curriculum night was held and was very successful. They have also kicked off the Curriculum Institutes to establish a framework to build the curriculum. Mrs. Stone already gave the update of what happened at Memorial School in terms of well-being. In the area of engagement, they are reviewing the one-page update and survey.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the Strategic Visioning team has been meeting while Utilization was meeting to help keep an eye on the vision for the District. They looked at what they thought would be the best academic experience for the students. They looked at three distinct options: status quo; an 8-12 high school, 5-7 middle school and two K-4 schools; or district-wide K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

They looked at the District's strengths in people, places and programs. They then tried to "dream big" and are now identifying themes and will cross-walk that with the recommended grade configurations. Dr. Veronesi then shared some ideas that came up, including community gardens at every building, composting, genius time built into every school for every grade, students working with teachers in small groups, variety of more kinesthetic tasks across curriculum, a dog in every building, diversity, a partnership with urban schools and regular technology institutes for both students and teachers.

A couple of themes that emerged had to do with the space people are looking for. Children and adults want to be in learning spaces with natural light, furniture available so they can learn outside and in spaces that allow for movement but also more private spaces. They are really trying to look at the rooms that currently exist. Students and adults want choices in what and where they learn. They want space that supports them individually and collectively. They want opportunities to expand their world and their connections. They want to be with people and in places that support their sense of belonging and safety. They want opportunities to choose and take risks and they want time to breathe and discover.

Dr. Taylor felt it was vital to have some type of framework when looking forward and that it be presented to the parents along with how those programmatic aspects would work in each type of configuration. He feels that it's imperative for the parents to have the choice about the buildings as well as their student's experience. Dr. Veronesi commented that they might not even be talking about strategic visioning if there weren't two programs in the district. Dr. Veronesi projected keeping the elementary schools the way they are, but having Memorial and Strong have a combined approach design. There has been discussion about developing a program through student voice and student choice.

Dr. Taylor felt that that approach would work with options B and C. Dr. Veronesi agreed and felt that option A provides an opportunity for the most creative thinking. She also believes there could be the choice for a multi-aged classroom along with a single-aged classroom within the same building. Dr. Taylor felt that those choices should be clear on each option.

Dr. Veronesi also reminded everyone that the Utilization committee has been working on this for about seven years and that the Strategic Visioning committee hoped to have soft outlines by the end of this year. Mr. Augur agreed that something was needed soon.

Mr. Yamartino confirmed that the solution could ultimately be incorporated in option A, B or C, but the direction is leading to a conclusion that the school configuration is not the primary driver of. This would mean that a decision for option A, B or C would not necessarily cause the final program to drastically change. Dr. Veronesi stressed that this would be an approach rather than a program. Mrs. Boyle felt that Utilization may have been at this for five to seven years, but programmatic changes have only come up this year. Mr. Hicks stated that they have been talking about programmatic change for a long time, with most of the impetus behind that being financial. Mrs. Boyle felt that the conversation about the program at John Lyman came about during discussions about closing a building.

Dr. Veronesi reiterated that it is an arduous process making building decisions and also commented that, moving forward, she would not want to describe the approach as the best of both programs. However, there would be no immediate necessity to make any changes if the Board decides on option B or C. She would, however, recommend that they look at these choices moving forward.

Mr. Augur felt that the Board needs to make a balanced decision and Dr. Friedrich stated he didn't hear whether one or two programs were necessary in the new approach. Dr. Veronesi reiterated that people felt that choice was important, but the description of Lyman School has come up as important for many people.

Committee Reports

A. Utilization Committee Meeting - March 6, 2018

Mr. Augur reported that Utilization committee talked primarily about two documents and referred the Board to the draft of the single-page informational document. Mr. Moore asked Dr. Taylor if he was suggesting that this document not be distributed until the soft outline is available. Dr. Taylor felt that there should at least be a paragraph on the back explaining the constraints and considerations.

Dr. Veronesi was concerned that people will be looking for a guarantee, but things may have to change. Discussion continued about what information will be included on the back of the document. Mrs. Boyle felt that the document was very easy to read and suggested that the numbers be explained on the back as well.

Mr. Augur went on to review the proposed survey and explained their reasoning behind asking for rankings. Mrs. Geraci wondered if they were going to ask what school the respondents' children were in. Mr. Hicks and Dr. Friedrich asked why there wasn't an option for no children or if they even needed that information at all.

Mr. Augur explained that Utilization had intended to have the survey out in April and it was decided that the changes will be made and the Board can look at it next week.

Communications

Mr. Moore reported that he has received letters from Tina Goldrick, Alicia Mancarella, Michelle DiMauro, Roan O'Connell, Jennifer Almodovar, Katie Ganino, Lauralyn Vynalek, Kimberly Johnson, Cheryl DiNallo and Rick and Diane Sartor. Most of them were about utilization issues with a few about music and one about security. Mr. Augur mentioned Beth and Tim Vanes who emphasized eighth grade.

Mr. Hicks reported that he and Mr. Moore were at Coginchaug this morning for the student-run program that involved approximately 200 students where they had some poetry and music. The students were respectful and when the time was over, they went back into the building. Mr. Hicks was very proud to be part of the program. Dr. Veronesi also reported that Strong School held something as well and she felt that it was a step up into core ethical values, rather than a walkout.

Business Manager's Report

Mrs. Neubig had nothing further to add.

Public Comment

Heidi Johnson, from Durham, stated that she is a staff attorney at Social Security and sees a snapshot of the different towns in Connecticut. Her husband is a long-time prosecutor in Tolland. She felt that the value of the school resource officer cannot be overstated. She realizes that not everyone will get all that they want, but hopefully all of the best things will be preserved. Mrs. Johnson would like to see any available data on having eighth grade in the high school, but does feel that it would be misguided to even consider it based on developmental issues and safety. She does feel that the only way to possibly go wrong would be to put eighth graders in the high school.

Laura Francis stressed how strongly she feels about a student resource officer. She feels that it has been needed for many years now and that recent events did not create the need, but may be a catalyst to finally make the decision. She feels that putting a security guard in each building is really not getting much more than just another set of eyes. Mrs. Francis also explained that the Resident Troopers have responded to school issues in many ways, but both towns can't continue to support that as it takes them away from other work. If the District does get an SRO, the towns' Troopers will be able to share information and collaborate with that person. She encouraged the Board to bring on an SRO as soon as possible. Mrs. Francis also felt it was time to seriously consider a new planned design on how the children are educated. If it is true that one program is better for children in grades 5-8, then she believes it's time that the District takes the best of all worlds and offers it to all the students. Otherwise, if children have to choose, they are missing out on something. Mrs. Francis also encouraged the Board to do this sooner rather than later. She also asked them to consider what information will really be gained by a survey and felt that it could just be a delay tactic to making hard decisions. Mrs. Francis also stressed that eighth grade should never be in the high school.

Karen Stackpole, an environmental consultant, stated that she grew up in Durham and attended Brewster, Korn, Strong and Coginchaug. She recently returned back to Durham to raise her children in District 13. She has a five-year-old and an 11-year-old at Memorial. Her daughter was one of the last students to ever attend Korn School. Going over to Memorial, her daughter was a fourth grader on a middle school schedule and was in a portable. She hopes that when her son does not have to go to eighth grade in the high school. She does appreciate the proactive approaches that are being taken at the high school, but finds the possibility of eighth grade at the high school counterintuitive to that thinking. Mrs. Stackpole also asked if anyone has asked the current high school students how they would have felt to be in eighth grade at the high school.

David Booth, from Durham, commented that he grew up in upstate New York where it was very common to have junior and senior high schools combined in the same building. Growing up, he rode a bus that

transported K-12. He felt it is more about culture than the kids' ages. They also had all the schools on one campus. Mr. Booth also stated that Lyman had a team performing a skit at Odyssey of the Mind this weekend and he also hoped everyone gets to see the girls' basketball team win this weekend.

Carl Stoup felt that the time has come to make the decision to create one program now.

Adjournment

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 10:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First