

**Revised**

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Committee met in Regular Session on Thursday, May 31, 2018 at 6:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks and Dr. Taylor.

Committee members absent: Mrs. Boyle and Mr. Yamartino

Other Board members present: Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore and Mrs. Petrella

Administration present: Mrs. Neubig, Business Manager, and Mr. Rossignol, Director of Student Services and Special Education

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Comment**

Sarah Jane Bailey, from Durham, has done some research on a School Resource Officer and distributed handouts to the committee. She conducted a survey on Survey Monkey and asked four questions: where do you live, would you like to have a School Resource Officer, would you be willing to consider the following non-law enforcement options and if yes, then click all that apply; and any comments. In seven days, she received 131 responses and 114 of those were completed. Most of the people that responded were from Durham and one responder was from Regional School District 17 who was curious about the survey. Forty-five percent of the respondents would like to have a School Resource Officer, 30 percent said no, 22 percent said they needed more information and one person skipped the question. Of the 63 individuals who answered the question about non-law enforcement options, 82 percent indicated they would like to consider behavioral interventionists as a non-law enforcement option. Out of 131 responses, 23 responded to question three asking for more information about the non-law enforcement options. The themes most seen in comments were individuals who work in school systems seemed to appreciate having an SRO and people appreciated having the survey and having a voice. She provided the responses for the committee members to look at. Ms. Bailey still does not support an SRO for many reasons and stated that the research shows there is really no evidence to support that an SRO will prevent or encourage a lot of safety issues. She asked the committee to consider other options.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion to approve to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Augur, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Approval of Minutes - May 3, 2018 and May 16, 2018**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion to approve to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the minutes of May 3, 2018, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed, with Mr. Augur abstaining.*

*Mr. Hicks made a motion to approve to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Augur, to approve the minutes of May 16, 2018, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of May 16, 2018, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

## **Safety and Security**

### **Strategic Improvement Plan**

Dr. Taylor reviewed that some things had been agreed upon for next year, but a lot of outstanding issues remain. He felt that the big ticket item is the glass protection. Other options include door mechanisms. Dr. Taylor reviewed that they had discussed short-, medium- and long-term options and he wanted to get a general sense of people's feelings on short-term options that had been previously discussed (window film, securing doors, changing locks, etc.). He would then like to discuss intermediate- and long-term aspects, including vestibules and other items.

Mr. Augur felt that, because of upcoming discussions about construction and bonding related to that, the Committee should at least have obtained information about what would be the optimal design of entries at every school so that a comprehensive plan could be presented to the public. Mrs. Neubig explained that Dr. Veronesi had sent that to her today and she distributed it to the Committee members.

Mrs. Neubig explained that signage has been completed at Coginchaug and Central Office, but they do want to do the other schools as well. A final quote has been received for internal and external surveillance at all schools which includes upgrading the buzzer systems and the cameras. That project will be completed with current year supply funds. The Fire and Police Departments have to be consulted to define parameters about numbering the windows and that too will be completed. Window film will also be potentially completed by the target date. Mrs. Neubig explained that the demand for window film is exceeding the supply and the lead time is expanding every day.

Dr. Taylor explained that he is not necessarily convinced that window film serves a function at a pretty high cost. He also commented that they have discussed doing window film only in strategic areas and mentioned that there are differences in the samples they have looked at. He felt that if the film completely darkens out every window, he would be hard-pressed to agree with that. Mrs. Neubig agreed that there are all different kinds of window film and felt that they would want to go with a reputable brand, like 3M.

Mr. Hicks stated that ACES installed window film several years ago and he will find out what their take is on it and will try to get costs. Mr. Augur would like to drive by and see the building with the window film. Mr. Hicks stated that he has been in all of the buildings and has not noticed the window film. He also mentioned that a window film exists that will deflect bullets and projectiles.

Dr. Friedrich sees the benefit of window film, but is more concerned about hardening the internal entries. To make a hard shell that will continue to be porous and not actually harden the entrances to the classrooms would perhaps be a mistake. Dr. Friedrich would rather see the window film as part of a plan that included more internal security, with hard doors that would make it difficult for someone to enter classroom after classroom once an alarm has been sounded. He felt that installing film on internal windows would be a very important element. Mr. Augur also mentioned that quite a few of the doors have glass next to the doorknob. Dr. Friedrich also felt that having security cameras everywhere is a great idea, but they also need to pay attention to who is watching those cameras.

Dr. Taylor reviewed that the budget will be limited and choices will have to be made. Mr. Augur mentioned that the entryways were redesigned to meet state safety standards in the proposal from Silver Petrucelli. He felt it would make sense to ask Silver Petrucelli for help relating to the vestibule system and related office alterations and kiosk entries as they have done a lot of groundwork. Mr. Augur also agreed with splitting it up and with the window film not being as critical as some of the other options.

Mrs. Neubig stated that she spoke with Silver Petrucelli, who can draft proposals for \$500 per school, for upgrading the vestibules, including any kind of interior office alterations. Dr. Taylor doesn't feel like there has been a comprehensive presentation to the Board to allow them to get a good idea of the options. Dr. Friedrich did feel that all law enforcement is not the same and felt that they needed to be careful about the sources of information. Mr. Augur stated that someone he spoke that is involved with an SRO said that they would do the window film before the SRO because anything that delays entry is a positive.

Dr. Friedrich suggested looking at the protocols that students and teachers have for dealing with the situations, including running and hiding. Access to the classrooms is a key point to controlling the amount of damage. He felt that that might be a reasonable way to start. Mrs. Geraci also commented that it would be helpful to consult with different hardware companies. She mentioned that there is a key fob that teachers would wear that has a button on it to close the door. Dr. Friedrich felt that hardening from the inside out makes more sense, starting with training of children and teachers, then enhancing the effectiveness of that. Mr. Augur agreed but then wondered about the public perception of that.

Mr. Moore reported that Dr. Veronesi has had two training sessions for building protocols and they are working with the State Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Moore stated that building protocols would be an administrative function, but the Board should know what the protocols are. Dr. Friedrich felt that they needed to know the protocols for when they put hardware in place. He also believed that regular access to the buildings need to be controlled and summarized that he isn't sure that the money spent for window film wouldn't be better utilized inside the buildings.

Mr. Moore felt that they need to get a list of what's already been done, including cameras and protocols. Mr. Augur hoped that could be included in a future Superintendent's update and mentioned that the public will be looking for some sort of action. Mr. Moore also mentioned that some protocols should not be made public. Dr. Friedrich also suggested asking the student and teacher response trainers for their thoughts on what hardware changes should be made and other suggestions they may have.

Mrs. Petrella reminded everyone that the last several incidences of school shootings involved students with weapons already in the schools. Dr. Friedrich stated that that was why internal hardening should be done first. Mrs. Petrella agreed and also felt that the SRO is another line of defense in terms of social issues, psychological support for the students and training of staff.

Mr. Moore reported that Dr. Veronesi has not yet received an MOU from the State Police, but they have a meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Neubig stated that they met with Sgt. Byrnes last Wednesday and he was going to meet with his staff on June 6<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Taylor summarized that more information is needed on the safety improvements. Mrs. Neubig did have a document that included costs that she will reshare with the Board members. Dr. Taylor asked if a representative could come speak to the full Board on June 13<sup>th</sup> and Mrs. Neubig will relay that request to Dr. Veronesi. Dr. Taylor also asked if there could possibly be more than one expert in attendance, possibly on window film and door options.

Mr. Rossignol introduced himself to everyone and reviewed some of his early initiatives. He is looking to understand the social, emotional and behavioral supports that exist in the District. The theory is that approximately 80 percent of students can benefit from tier 1 support, including proactive practices that take place within the classroom and building, assemblies, celebrations of student achievement, etc. He is working on gathering information about what is currently taking place and will work to provide consistency throughout all the schools.

The group that does not have their needs met in the tier 1 level appears to be about 15 percent of students. They may require intermittent counseling with a school psychologist, an individualized reinforcement system and fake errands to help build their self-esteem and confidence. The remaining 5 percent of students need an increased level of intensity or tier 3 which can transcend into special education needs as well. These students may require wraparound services, outside providers, alternative settings and formal assessments so the students feel that they have a unified support system.

Mr. Rossignol's goal is to have a centralized document about what is currently happening in all of the schools by the end of this school year. He is very excited to work on this process in the District. Mr. Augur would like to have Mr. Rossignol come back in the early fall to speak about the assessment. Mrs. Geraci would be curious to know if he comes across items that could be added to the District's plan for additional training or programs that could be implemented.

Mr. Moore asked how they identify kids that are in need of assistance and Mr. Rossignol explained that teachers currently refer students to the principal and appropriate specialists. The team then comes together, reviews data and information and comes up with a plan. He explained that it is a little different in tier 3 and mentioned the ALSUP guide that was invented by Dr. Greene. The idea there is to go through and identify potential areas of problems, gain an understanding of why they are not meeting expectations and then work with the student to problem solve. Once students have IEPs, those goals and services are determined at PPT meetings.

Mrs. Geraci explained that when her company goes into a district, they ask the principal to give them their top 50 kids who have been identified. They then evaluate all 50 and come up with the top 30 of the kids who would receive services.

Mr. Augur asked how members of the community address issues if they are alerted to them and Mr. Rossignol stated that it should be reported to the principal or the teacher right away. An internal investigation would then be started. Mr. Moore mentioned that kids will probably be the first to know of any issues and they need a place to go to. Mr. Rossignol felt that it was important for counseling and mental health staff to get out into the classrooms at all schools. The school psychologists and social workers conduct risk assessments and outside resources are also available.

Dr. Friedrich mentioned that social media is a way for students to hurt each other and asked how the District can know if someone is being bullied. Mr. Rossignol stated that information certainly does flow into the school. Dr. Taylor mentioned that that would be a positive side of an SRO though it would be an expensive proposition if that's all the District was hiring an SRO for. Mr. Rossignol did not believe there was proactive surveillance by school employees, but his experience has been that that type of behavior is reported to the school by students or parents. He was not sure what role, if any, an SRO would play specifically to that. He has worked with SROs in prior districts and the benefit is having another dimension of protection and safety that law enforcement provides.

### **Korn School Closing: Savings and Cost Avoidance**

Mrs. Neubig reiterated that the actual savings from Korn School in the 2016-2017 school year was \$594,686. Looking at 2017-2018 year-to-date, she stated that the anticipated savings is \$812,000. It is that much higher because the one-time costs do not appear in the 2017-2018 school year. The District would be looking at a similar amount for next year, but that could change. Mrs. Neubig will share that information in a document with the Committee.

### **Department of Administrative Services/School Construction Grants Meeting Review**

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that she, Mr. Augur, Dr. Veronesi and two architects from Silver Petrucelli met on May 22, 2018 with Director Diamantis. They reviewed the options and received very positive feedback. Mr. Diamantis stated that he would support closing the school so that the District is not building-rich and throwing money at maintaining building that aren't needed.

Dr. Veronesi has drafted a letter to be sent to Mr. Diamantis summarizing their understanding of the meeting and asking for his concurrence.

Mr. Diamantis also supported the forgiveness of the Korn School liability. Moving on to Lyman, he also stated that he would support closing Lyman School and small additions on to other schools. The options that the District presented were acceptable to the state. He recommended getting the application in by January 30<sup>th</sup>, but preferably January 1<sup>st</sup>. They are also changing their website for submitting project applications. Mr. Diamantis also stated that they want to be as involved as possible in the project.

Mr. Augur also felt it was a very positive meeting and felt that it was crystal clear that the state would support the additions, even with ownership of Lyman School.

### **Utilization Survey Review**

Dr. Taylor had sent out some updated information, but the complete data set is not yet available. He felt it was pretty clear about the division between Choices A, C and D, with very few people liking Option B. There were more responses from Durham than Middlefield, but reflective of the general population percentages.

Dr. Taylor stated that they will compile a written report and Mr. Augur reported that he has done some work on the results for each of the options. Dr. Taylor asked if the Committee felt that the actual comments should be displayed online or if they should be summarized. Mr. Augur felt that some selected

items would be included in the report, but all of the comments would be available somewhere. It was generally agreed that any inflammatory comments would not be published.

Dr. Taylor and Mr. Augur will work together to draft a report to be circulated to the committee members. Mr. Moore stated that he and Dr. Veronesi have started working on the newsletter.

### **Utilization Next Step and Dates**

Mr. Moore reviewed that there is one last Board meeting for the school year on June 13<sup>th</sup> and there will be an executive session between then and July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Augur stated that they will have a draft of the report available at that point to circulate to the full Board.

Dr. Taylor also stated that they would discuss hardware components of school safety at the full Board meeting as well. Mr. Moore stated that there will also be administrators' reports that night.

Mrs. Neubig reported that she has been working with Dattco and received information back yesterday. It does not appear that the number of buses would necessarily decrease, but they will not increase. Looking at other variables, the adjustment of school start times could be a factor in decreasing a bus. Additionally, a cost savings may be realized by decreasing the number of runs a bus makes daily, resulting in a lower number of daily contracted hours. However, an important factor to consider is student ride time.

### **Public Comment**

Heidi Johnson, from Durham, stated that it seems like in the time that her kids have been at Brewster, there has been a lot of turnover in social workers and the psychologist which does not seem very positive to her.

Theresa Weimann, from Durham, asked that everything be included in any information about the survey results. She also mentioned that she filled out the survey online four different times with four email addresses and she knows several people that did that as well. She would also like to know why Option A shows a cost of \$2 million, but the cost analysis sheet says \$2 to 4 million and does not include redoing the cafeteria and the fact that Brewster is 70 years old. She felt that the likelihood of unforeseen repairs will come up and it does not address all of the other capital needs that Brewster has. For Option C, it will cost the District \$4 million, but really is \$2.3 million for the end-of-life repairs because every school has at least \$2 million in capital needs listed. Mrs. Weimann also learned that a previous architecture firm had been hired in 2013-2104 and asked why Silver Petrucelli came in and all of that money was spent over again. She also stated that in the previous firm's presentation, it was stated that Brewster has a significant amount of end-of-life repairs that are needed. She would like a list of what has been fixed since that 2014 report. She stated that she expects an answer in writing about these issues within the next couple of weeks or she will file a complaint with the State. She has been in contact with a member of the State Board of Education and preliminary findings suggest that there is a chance that they might win this.

Kate Finch, from Durham, teaches in a district that has window film and it's invisible. She offered to arrange with her principal if Board members want to check it out. They also have an SRO. She also explained that she has a professional code of conduct and is not allowed to contact students and she was sure that that applies to the staff in this district. She would think that the school psychologist's time is best spent face to face with the students and not on social media. Their SRO does monitor social media

and the students keep him in the loop also. She also believes that safety and security protocols should not be shared with the public and there are some that are withheld from staff as well.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First