

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, August 14, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Board members present: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich (by telephone), Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino

Board members absent: Mrs. Booth and Mr. Hicks

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

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the Executive Session portion of the agenda can be eliminated and she will email the Board to explain.

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education regular session meeting - July 3, 2019

Mrs. Geraci made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of July 3, 2019, as presented.

Mr. Yamartino explained that he was not at the meeting, but the minutes state that he seconded a nomination. It was determined that Mrs. Geraci had seconded the nomination.

Mr. Yamartino then made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended.

In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of July 3, 2019, as amended: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Board Special Meeting - August 20, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School

Mr. Moore explained that this special meeting will be a very short one, primarily to vote on a resolution for the November ballot.

Next Board Special Meeting - September 4, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School

Mr. Moore explained that this special meeting will be a community meeting.

Next Board Regular Meeting - September 11, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School**Strategic Coherence Plan: 2019-2020 Draft**

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that the Administrative Council has targeted areas for the coming school year. In the area of student achievement, a new K-5 report card will be used that is aligned with the standards and will more accurately show students' growth over time. Exploration and implementation will begin on project-based learning. They will also begin examination and implementation of best practice with supporting students with dyslexia, finalization of the SRBI protocols and practice, enhancement of shared faculty time, enhancement of the instructional rounds practice and development and beginning implementation of gifted and talented identification protocols and design.

In the area of well-being, the partnership with CCSU will continue with specific programming at the middle school and the middle school will also begin restorative practices. Dr. Veronesi thanked Katy Reddick who brought this to their attention as a way to support students at the middle school. They will continue to enhance social-emotional learning in Pre-K-5 with Second Step curriculum, the Communities model at Memorial and Advisory at Strong and Coginchaug. The Career Center programming at Coginchaug will be expanded and the partnership with Ningbo will begin with 24 students arriving on September 30, 2019. The partnership with Middletown High School has also been solidified and there will be a series of community/parenting on the topic of equity as well.

In terms of Engagement, the school and community climate survey will be distributed and analyzed this year. Improvement strategies will be created from that feedback. The communication framework will be expanded, to include some changes in the use of social media. Safety and security continue to be enhanced. The first phase of the Portrait of the Citizen process will begin and the MTA programming is being expanded to include college transition programming. They are also finalizing transition planning for districtwide grade configuration.

Committee Reports**A. Utilization Committee Meeting - August 14, 2019 (next meeting September 19, 2019)**

Dr. Taylor reported that their discussion was mainly around Korn School and some of the ongoing issues with Brewster and Memorial. Regarding Korn School, they discussed a timeline, how to handle the existing bonding and what additional information needs to be obtained. They also discussed engaging members of the community. They felt that it would be worthwhile to move forward with paying off the bonding as that frees up the uses allowed. They also talked about sending out a survey to get an idea about any community organizations that might want to use the space as well as a general idea about other potential uses. Discussion continues with the towns, but the ball is in the district's court. The committee hopes to come back to the board with a series of options and potential costs.

Dr. Friedrich added that they a responsible plan would also need to include revenue streams that will be sufficient to support the operation of the building. Dr. Taylor felt that it could be \$150,000 to \$200,000 or more per year to operate the building.

Communications

Mr. Moore has received several emails about people wanting to join committees and he has interviewed three of them. Julie Lindon, a librarian at Yale, wants to attend Student Achievement and Utilization meetings before making a decision as to which committee she would like to join. Bronwyn Commins, a retired teacher, is also interested in Student Achievement. Felicia Robichaud has not yet responded to Mr. Moore's request for a meeting. Thomas Peters, a student, was very interested in serving on a committee and having input. Grace Guidet, who was on Student Achievement, has resigned from the committee but volunteered to continue to work with the district on a talented and gifted program.

Mr. Yamartino commented that having a student serve on a committee may possibly count towards community service and he felt that having student input would be great. He would like to see that on the towns' boards as well.

Mr. Moore also reported that Laura Francis has invited the board members to come to a community resilience-building workshop which is being held on the first day of school.

Dr. Veronesi reported that she had received a request from a student in another district to be a tuition-paying student, however that request was withdrawn. She did gather information from Lyme-Old Lyme and will share that information with the board members. Lyme-Old Lyme's annual tuition rate ranges from as high as \$19,000 to as low as \$10,000. Faculty members' children can attend at a 50 percent discount. Dr. Taylor felt that it made sense for the Policy Committee to discuss this.

Mr. Moore mentioned that several new laws have been enacted and the Policy Committee will need to incorporate those into the district's policies. Dr. Veronesi suggested having a co-chair for the Policy Committee. Mr. Yamartino mentioned that the Policy Committee only met once last year and three times the year before. Mr. Moore explained that Mr. Yamartino, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Caramanello and Mrs. Booth are currently on the committee. Mr. Yamartino volunteered to co-chair the Policy Committee.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Veronesi confirmed that the students from Ningbo will arrive on September 30th and mentioned that they are in need of about three more host families. The students will be here until October 11th.

A meeting was held with the ConnectiCare representatives in July to talk about the \$35,000 allowance for well-being and they talked about incentivizing members to have annual physical exams. Dr. Veronesi sent a short questionnaire to staff about well-being to get some more feedback. ConnectiCare, Delta Dental and Liberty Bank will all be available at convocation.

Dr. Veronesi also reported that the district did receive the grant to have Christopher Eaves speak at convocation. He will also do professional development with the library media specialists as well as technology teachers. He will return throughout the year to work with groups of teachers as another way to expand the HOT approach.

On Monday, Dr. Veronesi will meet with Bonnie Koba, the arts and education program manager at the state and director of Higher Order Thinking schools, and Darren Wood, the puppeteer who has been at Lyman. They have found that reading fluency has improved through the puppeteering program and they hope to start the program at Memorial and Brewster.

Project-based teaching and learning training began this summer, with every administrator and 15 teacher leaders. The guiding coalition of the Project of the Graduate also met this summer and decided to shift that to be called Project of the Citizen in District 13. They made that decision based on the mission statement and through the strategic visioning work. Students feel very strongly about being a citizen of their classroom, their school and the communities. A focus on equity will be included. They also participated in a community identity exercise where they looked at the identity of Durham and Middlefield to use as a backdrop for this.

Dr. Veronesi invited the board members to the convocation luncheon from 12:30 to 1:30 next Friday. It will be a barbecue and a potluck for 350 people. Convocation will be over by 3:00 PM.

Mr. Moore mentioned that the district will now be able to set the graduation date, regardless of snow days. He also mentioned that he had received an email from Ningbo and that they had gotten hit by the typhoon, but not too much was damaged.

Director of Finance's Report

Mrs. Neubig reported that the district finished strong with revenue at 89 percent. Building Use came in under budget, but that was offset by an increase in miscellaneous revenue. The Special Ed Excess Cost grant was also less than expected. Expenses finished at 97.29 percent, including committed funds. She estimates that the surplus will be close to last year, at \$900,000, with 75 percent of that due to unexpended salaries and benefits (mostly in noncertified staff and substitutes). Security items were committed in late June and were accounted for in the budget.

Mrs. Neubig explained that salaries were budgeted at 98 percent this year, but there were changes through staff attrition. Sixteen staff members had taken various leaves throughout the year. The district saved \$450,000 in benefits primarily due to 25 less employees on the health insurance plan than had been budgeted. Mrs. Neubig does believe that the district can reduce the amount budgeted for conversions and possibly eliminating that altogether in the future.

Money was also saved on workers' comp and course reimbursement for teachers. Purchased services was under budget by \$132,000, primarily legal services. Leases were under because the district restricted color printing this year. Tuition was over budget due to an increase in magnet school enrollment and outplacements. There was a savings in property insurance. MTA had higher revenue than was budgeted, with four students more than projected, resulting in a \$22,000 surplus.

Lunch prices will not increase in the 2019-2020 school year. Food service operated at close to breakeven and will hopefully show a profit this year, with the breakfast program being so successful. The new buses are in and bus routes will go live on August 19, 2019.

A leaking underground fuel tank at Memorial had to be removed and the soil remediated. The leakage was not significant and soil samples came back clean. This means that there is no emergency generator

available there and the Town of Middlefield has been informed. Work with Silver Petrucelli for the bonding will begin tomorrow and meetings have been held with Nathan Jacobson to start the culvert replacement.

Regarding security, the visitor kiosks are targeted for early fall. Installation of the surveillance cameras has begun. Lock boxes have been received and the SRO will help decide where they will be installed. Cell phone boosters started at Brewster today and will hopefully be complete before school starts.

Mrs. Neubig explained that July financials were also included in the board's packets, but there is nothing out of the ordinary. She explained that she will send a list of what Buildings and Grounds has been working on over the summer.

New Business

A. Board Retreat

Dr. Veronesi explained that Peter Maher, from Shipman and Goodwin, is available on September 7th, if that works for the Board. She will email the information to everyone. Dr. Taylor requested that the retreat just be the board so that they can focus on the upcoming budget and what the priorities should be. Mrs. Geraci agreed and stated that she would like to see clear initiatives. Mr. Moore explained that Attorney Maher was going to attend to continue the discussion on the board's responsibilities. Dr. Taylor hoped that could be delayed so that the board could focus on budget priorities. Dr. Veronesi agreed that the retreat in January is too late for those discussions.

Dr. Veronesi suggested having a board retreat for the purpose of budget priorities and parameters to a bit later in September and to finish the work with Attorney Maher at another time.

Regarding budget meetings, Mr. Yamartino suggested possibly having the Superintendent's report and Director of Finance's report at one meeting of the month and then having the other meeting to focus on just one or two issues. Dr. Veronesi felt it would be helpful to have priorities and a shared commitment before the budget season. Mr. Moore reminded everyone that the budget has recently been driven by threatened cuts from the state and that a decrease in the budget is probably not sustainable with the new programming being proposed. He also mentioned that he has heard that students leave the district for other schools because of deficiencies in programs in the district. Mr. Yamartino added that the cuts from the state are still on the table over the next several years.

Dr. Veronesi suggested the board retreat be held on the first weekend of October, but Mr. Moore thought they would be having a barbecue at his house for the Ningbo students that weekend. Mrs. Petrella added that she would like to see the board have a retreat every couple of months. Mr. Yamartino reiterated that he would like to see one meeting a month dedicated to regular business and the other dedicated to a couple of specific topics. Dr. Friedrich commented that they all acknowledge the need for more time in the budget season and could evaluate the need for a second meeting after the budget process.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

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

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First