

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at 7:00 PM remotely.

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

Board members absent: None.

Administration present: Dr. Serino, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance.

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

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

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

**Approval of Minutes**

**A. Board of Education regular session meeting April 1, 2020**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes from the April 1, 2020 meeting.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the April 1, 2020 meeting, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

**B. Board of Education special session meeting April 6, 2020**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to approve the minutes from the April 6, 2020 meeting.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the April 6, 2020 meeting, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Dr. Taylor abstained. Motion carried.*

Mrs. Petrella commented that she likes having the emails attached to the minutes.

**Next Board Meeting - April 29, 2020 at 7:00 PM**

### School Closure Update

Dr. Serino explained that they had a meeting with the health director on Tuesday and it was noted that there are 10-13 cases of COVID diagnosed per day in the health district. Based on that, he felt that the region will not reach a peak until mid or end of May. There are increasing concerns about the use of the tracks, fields and parks in the area.

Today, they had a call with Commissioner Cardona who stated that he was working with the Governor and if a decision is to be made to extend school closure, they are trying to do that sooner rather than later. There is now a focus on what re-entry will look like. The Commissioner did advise superintendents to begin distance learning planning for summer rather than in-person summer school. Looking at possible graduation plans with a limited amount of in-person guests, the Commissioner felt that they could look at the end of the summer or into the fall. He did caution that people may have a hard time with graduations with limited guests and there could be potential protests.

They also talked about the importance of superintendents working with municipal leaders and paying close attention to the budget in terms of support that the schools and students will need. They are saying that the CARES act funding could potentially cover about 80 percent of what is currently received in Title I funding. The State Board of Education will get 10 percent of the CARES act funding for the state and 90 percent would go to local education associations. Regional advisory teams have been created and will be working closely with districts. They are also working with the Reopen Connecticut Task Force and will begin to inform districts about guidelines.

Governor Lamont had a brief conference call this afternoon, talking about increasing testing sites and the reuse and recycling of N95 masks. Small business help was discussed as was more information about food sources.

In District 13, a survey was sent to the parents and teachers. They took all of the feedback and looked at the types of support that is needed. Live instruction will include prerecorded lessons as well as some real-time connection with teachers and students such as office hours with high school teachers. Mrs. DiMaggio has created a roll-out plan and she will review that at the Student Achievement meeting. A proposal has also been created for the fourth quarter grading, including changing the weighting for the first two quarters to 30 percent, reducing quarter three to 20 percent and the fourth quarter will be pass with distinction, pass or fail and would count for 10 percent of the grade.

Dr. Serino has a meeting tomorrow with superintendents regarding the impact of distance learning if it continues into the fall and what grading will look like. They hope to let students and parents know what the grading will look like by Friday. Mrs. DiMaggio and the elementary principals and teacher leaders are continuing to look at grading for the fourth quarter will look like. There will be a focus on participation and completion.

Dr. Serino noted that they are inspired by the students and continue to see another side of the kids. She shared a clip of a YouTube series that was created by a freshman in the high school.

Discussion continues about prom and graduation which is a huge area of interest for the high school seniors. They were surveyed and were invited to virtually meet with Mr. Falcone and Mrs. Melillo to talk about specific plans. They are discussing a virtual graduation ceremony as well as a live graduation ceremony, should that be able to happen. Mr. Petronio will oversee the creation of the virtual graduation.

Dr. Serino will share the staffing and job responsibility chart with the board on Friday. Tomorrow, cell phones will be distributed to all of the school secretaries and some of the Central Office non-union staff. Those numbers will be on the website and people can call directly to speak to the school secretaries. She did note that any failure to comply with executive order 7R in terms of paying all employees could impact funding from the federal government. This morning, the negotiations with Dattco were finalized and the projection that had been made initially (80 percent payment) was where the district landed.

The custodial crew continues with facilities maintenance and use of the courts, tracks and fields continue as well, with growing concern. Dr. Serino felt that they may be forced to close that access if the rules continue to be disregarded. The water main project on Pickett Lane could begin at the end of April and go into the beginning of June and may close Pickett Lane. The district continues to distribute meals at an average of 12 students a week. Tech support continues to be outstanding as teachers and support staff have devices and students have Chromebooks at home. They continue to look into different applications that will become necessary with distance learning.

In the area of well-being, they talked specifically at the recent administrative meeting about ways the district is making sure that every student is connected. The administrators are touching base with the teachers and there is a system of support and connection for any student who needs it. The administrators participate in a lot of meetings and they are also beginning to make phone calls to staff to check in. Mrs. Manning and Dr. Serino finalized a proposal with CCSU to provide support with a webinar for the staff at Strong School, which will then take place at the other schools as well. Dr. Serino had participated in a webinar with Yale that had 1,000 participants.

Mrs. Booth added that her daughter's teacher posted videos of some Coginchaug students reading books for the children.

Mrs. Neubig explained that there is \$111 million in the CARES Act funding for the state. RSD 13 will receive 80 percent of the normal \$53,000 Title 1 amount. There is an additional \$27 million that is at the governor's discretion which will probably be targeted to higher impacted areas.

Mr. Moore noted that the teachers are putting in a lot of hours during this time, especially if they are parents trying to teach as well. He also noted that his grandkids are anxious to see their teachers. Mr. Moore also added that there are discussions about putting up a stronger sign that the recreation areas will have to be closed if people don't start following the rules. Mrs. Booth felt that that wouldn't change anything because people don't really seem to care. She also noted that the trooper has been there and hasn't said anything to people. Dr. Serino has been in touch with Laura Francis and Ed Bailey and they know they are close to needing to make a decision.

Dr. Taylor asked if there was an intermediate step to be able to enforce the rules, possibly with fines. He would hate to see the areas closed because of a few people who don't abide by the rules. Mr. Yamartino stated that Middlefield's Park and Rec issued an order about use of the park which carries the weight of an ordinance and comes with a \$95 fine that can be levied. The town also dumped sand in the skate park to prevent people from using it and removed all of the hoops from the basketball court. Dr. Serino will follow up with Mrs. Francis. Mrs. Booth stated that it is disheartening to see all of the people on the fields and courts. Mr. Moore noted that the basketball hoops at both the high school and Strong are sealed at the top.

**2020-2021 Budget Discussion**

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that she expected the surplus to be about \$683,000 and part of that (\$616,501) has been applied to the proposed budget. That number was used specifically to get it to a zero percent increase combined with cuts in expenditures (\$168,000) that were agreed upon in the administrative council meeting. The remaining \$67,000 would be applied to fund balance for 2021-2022 as would any additional surplus.

Regarding transportation, Mrs. Neubig did speak with Dattco just today and they have decided on an 80 percent cap for actual costs only. If any drivers do not return, that savings would also be passed on to the district. She did point out that nothing has been signed as of now, but they have agreed to submit documentation as proof of actual expenditures. Mrs. Neubig felt that most districts are coming up with an 80 percent agreement with their transportation companies. She also reminded everyone that state statute requires the district to pay the transportation company and if they were to not comply, ECS and federal funding could be withheld and an investigation would be conducted.

The line items have changed somewhat, including some budget cuts but also an increase for extended summer school. The 1.5 percent increase would be what the expenditures that the towns would normally vote on, but Mrs. Neubig stressed that the net budget remains the same as last year except for the percentage change for enrollment as well as any ECS cuts that may occur.

Mrs. Neubig again reviewed that the estimated surplus was \$616,000, additions to summer school were \$12,900 for staff and \$500 for supplies and deletions included professional services, buildings and grounds, a leased vehicle as well as various supplies totaling \$12,000. The biggest reduction was the Brewster gym floor (\$116,000). There were a few other items that were taken out of the budget as well. The China travel expenditures were also removed. These reductions total approximately \$168,000.

Mrs. Neubig then reviewed some capital expenditures that are still in the budget, including the turf replacement, classroom furniture replacement, unanticipated building equipment and maintenance and phase 2 of the sprinkler system.

Mrs. Geraci asked what the expansion of ESY would actually be and Mrs. Neubig explained that this was an expansion of summer school, not ESY. Mrs. Geraci then stated that she felt more money needed to be put in for ESY. Dr. Serino reiterated that the Commissioner had urged everyone to plan for distance learning this summer as well, but she feels that there is money in the budget to expand the number of days if they are actually back in session. Mrs. Geraci agreed that it will probably be distance learning, but asked if the district will be able to provide more since they will be saving the money from not being in the building. Dr. Serino stated that there will be conversations with the board about redirecting funds as time goes on. There is also money in the CARES act that can be directed towards intervention and compensatory education.

Mr. Moore explained that they had intended to approve the budget to go to public hearing tonight and asked for any other comments.

Mrs. Booth asked how the public hearing will be held and Mr. Moore reviewed that it will be held on May 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM and Dr. Serino explained that people may be able to participate and ask questions. The board-approved budget will go up on the website, along with the survey to get feedback. Mr. Moore explained that the normal budget mailing will go out to every homeowner in the beginning of May and can include the survey form as well.

Mr. Yamartino noted that staff additions are actually a net of two additions, not seven as was believed. The increase in the salary line item is .5 percent and that also includes the contractual raises. Mrs. Neubig commented that the vacancy factor was the biggest contributor to that. Mr. Yamartino asked if the estimated surplus is based upon continued distance learning for the balance of the year and Mrs. Neubig confirmed that it was. Mr. Yamartino asked if that will differ if the students go back to school during this school year. Mrs. Neubig felt that transportation would be the biggest difference and electricity would go up a big. She was not sure if the spring sports season would start. If substitutes were needed, that may have an impact. Overall, Mrs. Neubig did not feel it would be catastrophic.

Mr. Yamartino also wanted to be sure that everyone was fully aware that the \$616,000 surplus applied towards next year's budget will not be available for the following year. That would mean that if the following year's budget has no change at all, it will be short by \$616,000. Mr. Yamartino is in favor of this proposed budget, but wanted to be sure that everyone is aware of the fact that an increase will be coming in the following year. Mr. Moore noted that there is also the possibility of no athletics for at least part of next year and there may be an impact in the 2021-2022 budget from closing Lyman. Mr. Moore added that this budget is still lower than the budget was six years ago. Mr. Yamartino thanked the administration and staff for working hard to come in with this proposed budget and offered to make a motion to move it forward.

### **2020-2021 Budget**

#### **A. Vote to finalize 2020-2021 budget to go to public hearing**

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to finalize the 2020-2021 budget to go to public hearing.*

Mr. Moore noted that the additional playground equipment for Memorial and Lyman is still in the budget and Middlefield's Board of Finance has agreed to support that with \$25,000. Mr. Yamartino explained that he presented it to the Board of Finance on Thursday and the board unanimously approved keeping the \$25,000 in the budget.

Dr. Taylor has mixed feelings on the proposed budget. He is not sure if they are really investing in the real possibility that they will need to continue distance learning for most of next year. He noted that if cases begin to rise, along with influenza season, kids may not go back to school until March or April of next year, if not later. He was hoping to see significant investment in continuing education for teachers in distance learning and to have the software available to reach all of the students. Dr. Taylor asked about the ability to reallocate resources in the future as he felt it was likely that the district will be doing distance learning for the majority of next year.

Mr. Moore did have some information about what school may, in fact, look like next year with smaller classrooms, morning and afternoon sessions, separate busing, etc. Mr. Moore added that having kids in school is critical to allowing people to go back to work as well. He knows that situations will occur that they are not prepared for, but hopes that they will rise to the occasion as they have been so far. The board can take action to move money from one line item to another.

Dr. Friedrich added that if they were to continue with distance learning, additional money would be freed up. Dr. Taylor did not want to be reactive to the situation and would rather use the summer to educate the

teachers and get the best software platforms. He is aware that they will have to over-invest in some areas, particularly with the most vulnerable population. Dr. Taylor felt that this budget was not a proactive approach to the situation and stated that he did not want to be in this spot again next year.

Mr. Yamartino suggested that the Utilization Committee identify areas that might need improvement and ask them to develop a comprehensive list including costs. He also agreed with Dr. Friedrich in that there will be some savings in the budget if the district is still doing distance learning. Dr. Friedrich added that the budget includes an augment to the IT department which is a proactive investment.

Dr. Serino mentioned that District 13 is in the same situation as every other district and every plan being made is a plan for all scenarios. She felt that they should have some information in the next couple of weeks to help with these decisions. The state is hiring a chief academic officer with expertise in these areas. Dr. Serino hoped that the board would let the administration be the lead on this as informed by the State Department of Education. She assured the board that this is all part of the district's plans along with the consortium's.

Mr. Yamartino wanted to call attention to benefits at \$405,000 and explained that it represents roughly 80 percent of the increase in the budget. He felt that the administration worked very hard to assure that the costs would deliver the best education possible without undue burden on the taxpayers.

Mrs. Geraci asked about the field house and wanted to be sure that it's not in the budget. She felt that they didn't have all of the information yet. Mr. Moore confirmed that it is not in the budget.

*In favor of moving forward to public hearing on May 13, 2020 at 6:00 PM on the proposed budget of \$37,371,908, with a proposed net budget of \$34,602,207: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **B. Vote to determine date to adopt 2020-2021 budget**

Dr. Serino stated that the date would be May 27, 2020 for the board meeting and adoption of the budget if the public hearing is held on May 13, 2020.

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, that the board adopt its 2020-2021 budget at its May 27, 2020 meeting.*

*In favor of adopting the 2020-2021 budget at its May 27, 2020 meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **Communications**

Mr. Moore received an email from Laura Francis regarding the election of Board of Education members and it appears that there will be a vote in June to replace three members to serve until November, 2021. She also provided an opinion from the town's attorney on several ways to handle this issue. Dr. Taylor felt there were inconsistencies in the town's approach and interpretation of the Town Charter. Mrs. Geraci agreed with Dr. Taylor and asked if the board could challenge that. Mr. Moore will have Attorney Ritter look at this and will forward Mrs. Francis' letter to the board members.

Mr. Moore also reported issues from the CABE meeting and explained that most boards are having the same issues, including the budget and budget process. There are issues with transportation, grading, graduation and prom. The board chairs continue to talk about next year and summer school as well.

Mr. Moore has had two people interested in the superintendent's position and has also received a letter from Jen Zettergren who offered to assist on Project Graduation. She also supported the field house in the budget. Elaine Chhabra wrote a letter asking if the savings from this year will reduce taxes in the town and has concern about the lack of a referendum. Donia Viola wrote with a concern about not closing Lyman after hearing about playground equipment for Lyman. She would also like the board to eliminate transportation to magnet schools next year.

Mr. Moore explained that all communications will be attached to the minutes.

Mrs. Petrella reported that she had received a text from Cathy Hinsch who asked why seven new positions were being added. Mrs. Petrella did explain that it is actually two new positions, not seven. She also asked about the coordinator position for sixth grade and wanted to know what role that person will play, especially with social workers and counseling staff available. She was also curious about the duration of that position. Dr. Serino offered to call Mrs. Hinsch about her questions. Mrs. Petrella felt she was satisfied with her explanation, but thought she might talk to her about the coordinator's position.

Mrs. Caramanello noted that her RSD 13 email is not working, so Mr. Yamartino will send the link directly to her for the Executive Session.

### **Adjournment**

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to adjourn the special meeting of the Board of Education.*

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

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz

Alwaz First

### **Anticipated Executive Session**

#### **A. Discuss personnel matter**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.*

*In favor of entering into executive session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor. Motion carried unanimously.*

The executive session was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

#### **Public Comment Received Via Email**

**From:** fonto <>

**Date:** April 9, 2020 at 12:20:49 PM EDT

**To:** [rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)

**Subject:** FW: RE: Weekly Wednesday Update - April 8, 2020

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S7.

----- Original message -----

From: fonto <>

Date: 4/9/20 9:35 AM (GMT-05:00)

To: RSD Office of Superintendent via ParentSquare <[donotreply@parentsquare.com](mailto:donotreply@parentsquare.com)>

To the board of education

Are you kidding me, you want to spend this money on all these projects when people are not working, our businesses are going under. I cant believe what I actually read about your plans for the budget. The board of ed needs to curb all expenses period ! . Maybe you need to watch the news to see what's going on. You will be closing all the schools because no one will be able to afford the town of Durham and there taxes. Obviously you do not live in our town and apparently very disconnected with what's going on. I'm very disappointed in the board if ed and its leadership. We need to cut the budget in any way that we can. I'm asking you as a taxpayer, Please think of all the people that are affected in this current crisis and put a hold on any new expenses this year. You people on the board should be looking at all options to decrease the budget this year. This crisis is going to have a big trickle down affect that we haven't even seen yet. It's very hard as we all sit at home, with the majority of all of the taxpayers not getting a dime of income and seeing the board of education looking to spend more money. I myself have a very difficult time digesting this . Thank you in any way that you can help the people of durham and Middlefield by not increasing the budget this year.

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S7.

**From:** Jennifer Zettergren <>

**Date:** April 14, 2020 at 8:56:19 PM EDT

**To:** Brian Falcone <[bfalcone@rsd13.org](mailto:bfalcone@rsd13.org)>, "kserino@rsd13.org" <[kserino@rsd13.org](mailto:kserino@rsd13.org)>, Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>, Kathryn Veronesi <[kveronesi@rsd13.org](mailto:kveronesi@rsd13.org)>

**Subject:** Project Graduation

Hello,

I hope all of you and your families are well. Thank you for all you are doing to take care of the students, teachers, and staff.



We just had a Project Graduation meeting via zoom tonight. I know you don't have answers right now but I was wondering if there is a committee formed to discuss graduation. I read Commissioner Cardona's memo asking towns to form such a committee and watched a video about his meeting with high school kids from across the state.

Would it be possible for me to connect with someone on the RSD13 committee so I can express Project Grad's interest in supporting whatever plans are going to happen? The venue is flexible about moving the date but perhaps we need to go to a Plan B to find a way to acknowledge our seniors in a safe manner.

Also, please put the field house in your budget. :) It is long overdue and if you need letters to support such a move, just let me know. I know many people who would be happy to document their requests for completion of this project.

Take good care,

Jen

**From:** Elaine Chhabra <>  
**Date:** April 16, 2020 at 3:14:42 PM EDT  
**To:** Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>  
**Subject: Re: Question**

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your prompt reply to my question. It's a bit unsettling that there will not be a district referendum or town meeting vote, but I understand the town has to comply to the governor's executive order. I can only hope that the proposed budget will be fair in this uncertain economic time. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have moved out of town due to the high property taxes. Retirees can't afford to live in the homes they have worked so hard for during much of their lives. My husband and I have lived in Middlefield since 1997. We have payed over \$250,000 in property taxes to the town over the years. Something needs to change going forward. A big reset button has been pushed due to the virus.

Sincerely,  
Elaine

On Apr 15, 2020, at 10:12 AM, Elaine Chhabra <> wrote:

Dear BOE Chairman,

Times are tough for everyone during this pandemic. School buildings have shut down and online learning is the new reality. Taxpayers are home schooling. How is this way of schooling going to be taken into account with the budget? Will taxes be decreased as a result? Families are struggling financially. This is a situation like no other and it must be handled in a way that is in the best interest of every resident.

I appreciate your input.

Sincerely,  
Elaine Chhabra

Middlefield resident

**From:** Paul D Viola <>

**Date:** April 21, 2020 at 5:49:17 PM EDT

**To:** "[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)" <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>

**Subject:** Public Comment on BOE Proposed Budget 2020-2021

To All RSD 13 Board of Education Members:

I find it difficult to comprehend the closure of Lyman School as had been previously discussed. My reasoning is this: at the last Board of Education meeting, several members brought up the cost of new playground equipment for this school. With evidence of declining enrollment as noted over the past years, I would support the earlier assessment of pursuing closure of this school as was mentioned and argued.

Please be advised that the State of Connecticut does not mandate transportation costs be provided by any school district for a student(s) attending a Magnet School. I suggest you eliminate this line item from the proposal for the upcoming year. Making a choice remains an option but it would be incumbent upon the student's family to manage drop-off and pick-up and, thereby, realize a savings from the considerable expense incurred currently for a handful of participants.

From a distance, I wish you continue to collaborate in a sincere effort to "hold the line" as necessary throughout this difficult time and make a responsible decision when determining a sustainable and fiscally rational budget.

Donia Viola

Durham, CT

**From:** Michelle DiMauro <>

**Date:** April 22, 2020 at 10:48:22 PM EDT

**To:** Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>, Norm Hicks <[nhicks@rsd13.org](mailto:nhicks@rsd13.org)>, christine geraci <[cgeraci@rsd13.org](mailto:cgeraci@rsd13.org)>, Melissa Booth <[mbooth@rsd13.org](mailto:mbooth@rsd13.org)>, Maura Caramanello <[mcaramanello@rsd13.org](mailto:mcaramanello@rsd13.org)>, Victor Friedrich <[vfriedrich@rsd13.org](mailto:vfriedrich@rsd13.org)>, Lucy Petrella <[lpetrella@rsd13.org](mailto:lpetrella@rsd13.org)>, James Roraback <[jroraback@rsd13.org](mailto:jroraback@rsd13.org)>, R Andrew Taylor <[ataylor@rsd13.org](mailto:ataylor@rsd13.org)>, Robert Yamartino <[ryamartino@rsd13.org](mailto:ryamartino@rsd13.org)>, Kathryn Veronesi <[kveronesi@rsd13.org](mailto:kveronesi@rsd13.org)>

**Subject:** 4/22/20200 public comment

Good evening,

As I write this message, I struggle with you truly understanding the requests over the years to complete the Field Storage project. It is not solely about athletics as many misconstrue. It is about bringing our community together and completing something that was initiated over a decade ago. It is also about missed opportunities for RSD13 to generate additional revenue from Band Competitions, community events such as Relay for Life, Fun Runs, and yes, district and community athletic events. It is about taking pride in our community, students, staff and *facilities*. It is about putting closure on a very hot topic and being able to move forward.

I am disappointed that it was suggested at the March 11, 2020 BOE meeting removing the \$120,000 originally proposed in the 2020 - 2021 budget for the cost of a storage facility at CRHS to cover the exposed fixtures at the athletic complex. It is disheartening that the BOE was quick to suggest the removal of this nominal amount in a \$30 plus million dollar budget for completing a project that voters approved and committed to a decade ago.

I am disheartened that when a suggestion and potential solution was offered on January 10, 2020 via email on how to address potential funding for completion of the project (allocating revenue from the "Pay to Participate" fees to be earmarked over a period of 4 - 5 years to cover the cost of a storage facility), the BOE recommended at the January 25, 2020 Retreat that the "Pay to Participate" fee be removed from the proposed 2020 - 2021 budget. This is all pre-pandemic. The revenue generated from the athletic fees could have been designated to fund completion of the athletic complex, and offered a timeline for its completion. Figures obtained from the RSD13 Business Department highlighting the revenue collected since "Pay to Participate" was initiated in 2017 - 2018 are below. These funds have been applied to the "General Fund" for the past 3 years, not athletics.

#### Regional School District 13

##### Pay to Participate

19/20 . YTD \$41,900

18/19 . \$67,600

17/18 . \$64,450

Total \$173,950

I will continue to reference facts pertaining to the Field House obtained from the RSD13 Business Department. In September 2009, \$25,200 was allocated to develop architectural designs for the Field House. In April 2010, the district settled an appeal at the cost of \$110,000. At that time, Planning and Zoning stipulated that the bathrooms must be built within 18 months (18 months, December 2011). In August 2010, the district paid \$167,235 for a 4,000 square foot concrete building slab at the site. In 2011-2012, the district paid \$13,750 for architectural designs. January 2012, community members volunteer to raise funds to help the district complete the Field House project. April 2012, the district requested a 24 month extension from Planning and Zoning to complete the Field House project (24 months, April 2014). December 2012, the Field House Building Committee votes to recommend construction of a shell. January 2013, BOE Finance Committee support the recommendation of the Field House committee. There continues to be no definitive timeline regarding completion of the Field House project. To date, the total investment by the district and taxpayers has been **\$316,185**. The exposed fixtures (plumbing, wiring and concrete) will fail since action has not taken to cover them from the elements in a decade. As a point of reference, the district recently paid \$4,300 to replace an approximate 100 square foot concrete area in front of CRHS. The 4,000 square foot concrete slab and fixtures at the athletic facility are currently 10 years old.

The March 2013 NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) report, page 72, states that "Approximately 3,700 participants use the athletic facilities each year. This includes students from Cogenchaug, nearby schools, and members of the community." I would also like to call the Board's attention to The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), Athletic Program Evaluation,

May 1-2, 2013. Please note pages 20 and 22 which specifically address the outdoor facility and recommendations to have a timeline for completion of the project, outlined below.

Page 20

"Completion of this project will include locker rooms, lavatories, a training room, storage facilities and additional seating and lights for the turf field. A 4,000 square foot slab with preliminary plumbing pipes and conduits for lighting for these amenities is in place. Lack of funds and other issues have stalled the completion of this complex. While fiscal restraints are a reality, *it would serve the district well if a timeline were established to prioritize the completion of this project* and make it comparable to some of the best facilities in the state."

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"Recommendations

2. *Create a timeline* to phase in the remainder of the outdoor facility improvements/upgrades."

The district should be prepared for the upcoming NEASC and CIAC evaluations, typically conducted every ten years, and determine how it will justify ignoring suggestions and requests to complete of the project, or cover the fixtures, for the past 12 years. The BOE declined to maintain the \$120,000 proposed in the initial 2020 - 2021 budget. As a result, the district choose not to take advantage of the generosity of its community organizations, businesses and athletic boosters who pledged financial contributions to supplement the district's \$120,000 commitment, and ensure completion of the project to preserve the district and tax payers' investment. The district must be transparent and inform the public that our initial investment of **\$316,185** in this project is a total loss since there continues to be no plan or timeline to cover the plumbing, wiring or 4,000 square foot concrete slab that have remained exposed for a decade.

Respectfully,

Michelle DiMauro Murphy

**From:** Heather Parente <>

**Date:** April 28, 2020 at 2:52:00 PM EDT

**To:** Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>, [nhicks@rsd13.org](mailto:nhicks@rsd13.org), [cgeraci@rsd13.org](mailto:cgeraci@rsd13.org), [mbooth@rsd13.org](mailto:mbooth@rsd13.org),  
Maura Caramanello

<[mcaramanello@rsd13.org](mailto:mcaramanello@rsd13.org)>, [vfriedrich@rsd13.org](mailto:vfriedrich@rsd13.org), [lpetrella@rsd13.org](mailto:lpetrella@rsd13.org), [jroraback@rsd13.org](mailto:jroraback@rsd13.org), [ataylor@rsd13.org](mailto:ataylor@rsd13.org), [ryamartino@rsd13.org](mailto:ryamartino@rsd13.org)

**Subject: Fwd: 1st grade work load**

Hello,

I hope everyone is doing well!

Please see my email I wrote today. Since I sent the letter, Christy Barrett responded back to me and Emilio will have a plan b should he need it for writing. I also mentioned to other parents to express their concerns, seeing as we all seem to be in the same boat taking SEVERAL hours a day with writing. I need to break up daily assignments into several days and modifying as we go.

Thanks again for your time,

Heather Parente

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Heather Parente** <>

Date: Tue, Apr 28, 2020 at 11:46 AM

Subject: 1st grade work load

To: <[cdimaggio@rsd13.org](mailto:cdimaggio@rsd13.org)>

Cc: Kathryn Veronesi <[kveronesi@rsd13.org](mailto:kveronesi@rsd13.org)>, Susan Michael <[smichael@rsd13.org](mailto:smichael@rsd13.org)>, <[cbarrett@rsd13.org](mailto:cbarrett@rsd13.org)>

Hi there,

First off, I just wanted to thank you for the amount of work and time you are putting into creating and posting these assignments.

However, we do feel the work load is a little too heavy at this point. Please keep in consideration that parents are working and not able to focus 100% of their time on their children's work. I have talked to several parents and we all share the same feeling. Too much work in a short amount of time.

The writing is extremely overwhelming for our kids. I understand rigor, but I also understand that the reality of the work getting done without yelling and fighting is hard. When creating these lessons, please keep in mind that these kids will be doing this work mostly on their own. They are overwhelmed when they see what the teacher has in front of them and that theirs does not look like that. It would be great if the kids could see what they are expected to do at the beginning of the lesson so they have a visual of what is due each day. Or every few days as the work can not get done each day.

For science, it is extremely overwhelming. While my son can complain about work, he is genuinely frustrated with science. There is way too much information being told and there aren't any visuals for him to rely on when these forms need to be filled out. They can not be printed, so we must go back and forth trying to find the information which is not an easy process. We have resorted to looking up answers with Google.

Again, I understand that these are very trying times for everyone, but if there could be some consideration in modifying these assignments, students and parents would be much appreciative.

Stay safe,

Heather Parente