

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, March 23, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Auditorium at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut. Board members present: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff, Dr. Taylor and Mrs. Flanagan by phone.

Board members absent: Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks and Mr. Yamartino.

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Russell, Interim Business Manager.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

Donia Viola stated that she felt a lot of anxiety and frustration on both sides. The good news is that Governor Malloy was on the news today stating that special ed funding would remain in place. Mr. Brown, in the Special Ed Department of the State, confirmed that. Mrs. Viola wanted the Board to know that she does not consider any child who needs special help to be a burden, but considers the cost of the program to be a burden. She believes that the District has a program in place that seems to satisfy the State's requirements and she would like to wait until there are better economic circumstances before changing that program. Mrs. Viola also wanted to ask the Board to keep in mind that while we need the qualification and skills for a new business manager, perhaps we can pay a little less and still get quality.

Nick Faiella, from Middlefield, had sent an email urging the Board to vote yes on sending the field house project to referendum but he wanted the Board to know that they are very sincere about this effort. He is aware that this is a difficult budget season complicated by the State's budget problems. Mr. Faiella feels that the project will only get more expensive if we wait and we risk damaging the infrastructure that is already in place and paid for. Mr. Faiella was also encouraged by the unanimous vote of the ERC and by the long-term financing options that were presented. He reminded the Board that tonight's vote simply allows the people of Durham and Middlefield to weigh in on the completion of the project.

Chuck Stengel, speaking as a citizen of Durham, emphasized that Mr. Irish had given some very good suggestions on areas that can be cut. He is very concerned about the early intervention program and how that might grow over future years. He also has a minor concern about the transitional program and feels that the before- and after-school program should be left out. Mr. Stengel is also opposed to the field house, particularly since there is difficulty even putting together a football team based upon enrollment. He would be in favor of putting in breakage on the teachers' salaries, possibly at .5 percent, increasing the school lunch fee and pay-to-play.

Kevin Zettergren, from Durham, wanted to second what Mr. Faiella said about the field house. He believes it's a good opportunity to enhance soccer, track and football programs and see that area be finished.

Carl Stoup, from Durham, wanted to support Mr. Stengel's comments. He doesn't support closing down other small businesses here in town with the before- and after-school program. He also supports all the cuts that Jim Irish proposed last night and then some. Mr. Stoup believes we should support what we have in place now, make sure it is working properly and not add.

Heather Parenti, from Durham, is in favor of preschool. The kids with special needs require these services and need a full day for their lives.

Next Board Meeting - March 27, 2017 in the CRHS Library

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Renninghoff made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to approve the agenda as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes – March 8, 2017

The minutes were just posted today, but not many members had had the time to read them. This issue was tabled until Monday's meeting.

Field House Project

A. Motion to finalize field house project for public hearing

Mr. Moore explained that the ERC had a motion to move forward with \$750,000, but a recommendation was made last night by Mr. Russell to raise that to \$800,000 after he did an analysis. At this point, there needs to be a motion and a resolution to go to a public hearing on March 30, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Coginchaug Library.

Mrs. Boyle made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to finalize the field house project for public hearing as detailed in the following resolution on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Robert O. Mason Library at Coginchaug Regional High School. Motion was seconded by Dr. Taylor.

Mr. Renninghoff thought that the public hearing is more of a formality and felt that discussion would be more prudent after item B, the motion to hold referendum on the field house project.

Mrs. Boyle read the entire resolution into the record.

Mr. Renninghoff made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the resolution.

Mrs. Boyle would personally like to see the project be finalized. She feels that it is money that has been invested and, with every day that it sits exposed to the elements, it is rotting. She feels very strongly that we should be investing in our infrastructure. Mrs. Boyle would think bonding over 20 years would be the most conservative thing for the Board to do. She believes that it should be brought to the townspeople so that they may have a final say on money that's already spent to have this project done.

Mrs. Petrella agreed with what Mrs. Boyle and Mr. Faiella stated as far as letting the residents of the two towns make the decision, but she is concerned. She asked if the vote can be structured so that both towns have to approve it or is the District bound by a majority vote. Mrs. Petrella stated that while we want to hear from the people, 33 percent of the children are from Middlefield and 66 percent from Durham but the population is half. She doesn't feel there is equal representation from both towns, even if everybody voted. She felt this was especially important this year with the difficulty with the State's budget.

It was generally felt that it was a majority vote, much like the Board of Ed budget. Because of that, Mrs. Petrella does not feel there is equal representation and we may not necessarily be hearing from both towns. Dr. Taylor reminded Mrs. Petrella that the budget share is also not equal so he doesn't feel it's fair

to equate voting with representation. Dr. Taylor wouldn't want a 50-50 vote when Durham is responsible for 66 percent of the budget and felt that you have to look at it from both perspectives.

Mr. Moore reviewed that residents have put together proposals to pursue this several times and have looked at ways to finance it. Our debt service in the budget begins to drop off dramatically after 2017-2018 which is the year this would be funded in, so the impact of 20-year funding on debt service is not going to be a huge amount. Mr. Moore believes that it's affordable in the year that it will be financed and the effort from the community makes it worth bringing it to the citizens to decide. Dr. Taylor agreed and felt that it needed to go to the community for a decision.

Mr. Augur stated that there are other things that the Board is putting off and feels that in this economic environment, we are not at a point to make a decision to spend more money on this regardless of the fact that there's debt service. He personally doesn't feel this is the right time to do this.

Mr. Renninghoff agrees with Mr. Augur and Mrs. Petrella for many reasons. The bottom line is that it's mainly the parents of football players who are driving this project though he does realize that other sports would use it too. He feels that we would be building the field house to entice other teams into a co-op football program, like a "build it and they will come" premise. Mr. Renninghoff also felt that there are other physical plant issues that need to be taken care of. He also feels that there is nothing wrong with debt rolling off. He would also prefer to finance projects over a shorter period of time and pay less interest over the lifetime of the note. Mr. Renninghoff reminded everyone that our country is a republic and we elect people to represent our interests. While he admires the democratic process of referendum, he feels that the Board needs to make these difficult decisions. Mr. Renninghoff would ultimately like to see the field house completed, but just not right now. He also brought up an email that Dr. Friedrich had sent where he stated that if we commit to this borrowing authorization and it passes, so be it but we are then on the hook for the lifetime of the note as a fixed cost. Mr. Renninghoff just cannot support this borrowing authorization at this time.

Dr. Taylor asked what the initial expenditure for the foundation was and Mr. Renninghoff explained that it was part of a \$5 million bond package for roofs, wells and that facility, but he did not know the actual cost of the slab and associated mechanicals.

Mrs. Flanagan felt it was in the neighborhood of \$300,000 for the foundation. She also commented that the foundation has wiring underneath and plumbing access. Again, Dr. Taylor felt very strongly that, regardless of his personal opinion, the Board should send this to the public to make the decision.

Mrs. Petrella would also like to see the project finished, but just feels that this year is a good time. It may be possible to resurrect it if things change with the State budget. She also felt that if it didn't pass this year, it should be brought out again next year.

Mr. Augur told the story of the Hilton Garden Inn and Anthem offices on Route 68 that both sat mid-project for a long length of time until they made financial sense. Mr. Augur believes that it does not matter that we already spent \$300,000. It does not make financial sense to do this now so we should not.

Mrs. Boyle explained that the District has been waiting for the right time and there's never going to be a right time, ever. She would like to see the Board give the opportunity for the taxpayers to make the decision. She feels that it has nothing to do with football but everything to do with athletic participants on that field and the community's use.

Mrs. Flanagan believes that we need to hear from the community. She doesn't know what the right answer is and recognizes that the Board hears from certain people, but that's not the whole community. Mrs. Flanagan reiterated that the Board would be voting tonight only to go to referendum, not to approve the spending. She understands that we are in economic crisis, but there are many people who are asking the Board to bring this forward. Mrs. Flanagan doesn't have a problem sending it to referendum and is much more concerned about getting a math interventionist into the schools and spending the District's money on academia. That said, it is about the community voting for what they want.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that last year's budget came in at a negative 2 percent and she wonders what the conditions are that would make people collectively agree that it's the right time. She believes that the people will make the decision and if they decide it's not going forward, she doesn't believe this project will go away.

Mrs. Flanagan felt that the Board has spent a lot of time and energy and went out to bid to get this estimate and there may be some point down the road that it comes up again, but she would certainly not expect to take it up again next year. The vote on the referendum will certainly answer those questions.

In favor of approving the resolution and moving the project to public hearing on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at 7:00 PM: Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Opposed: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed, 4-3.

B. Motion to hold referendum on field house project

Mrs. Boyle made a motion, seconded by Mr. Renninghoff, to hold a referendum on the field house project on Tuesday, May 2, 2017.

In favor of holding a referendum on the field house project on Tuesday, May 2, 2017: Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Opposed: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed 4-3.

Mrs. Flanagan confirmed that this would be a separate referendum question and not as part of the budget question.

2017-2018 Regional School District 13 Budget Discussion

Dr. Veronesi explained that there was some discussion about whether the salary line needed to be funded at 100 percent; salary line has been reduced by \$50,000. Dr. Veronesi and Amy Emory also reviewed the tuition costs for the pre-K program and increased the tuition to \$1,850 for the three-year-old program and \$3,000 for the four-year-old program.

Dr. Veronesi has also been working with the Food Service Director, Mark Basil, looking at lunch prices and our elementary school lunch prices are the highest in the area. Our secondary school lunch prices are close to the top. Mr. Basil will suggest that lunch prices be increased by 25 cents at the May BOE mtg. They also looked at potential reductions in staffing for food service, either by reducing hours or by reducing FTE's. Another topic of discussion has to do with satellite service, meaning one kitchen cooking and transporting the food to other schools. As enrollment decreases and participation in food service decreases, this is being explored. Dr. Veronesi would not recommend out-sourcing our food service as we would not realize a significant savings.

Mr. Renninghoff asked if the schools with lower lunch prices are run by the schools themselves or outsourced, but Dr. Veronesi was not certain.

Dr. Veronesi also explained that the District needs to honor the collective bargaining agreement that currently exists for food service which includes benefits for the employees.

Mr. Augur asked why the District switched the computer system of paying for lunches and Dr. Veronesi noted it was more efficient and less expensive. Mrs. Boyle asked if the Board needed to vote on that lunch increase, but Dr. Veronesi stated that that is done in May. Mr. Renninghoff had asked for funds to help cover the health benefits, but this does not address that.

Mr. Moore summarized that this is about a \$200,000 reduction in expenses and about \$100,000 increase in revenue.

Mrs. Petrella asked about the numbers of students in the pre-K program, but it was explained that the numbers included in the tuition are for typical peers only. Dr. Taylor brought up the District's mission statement and scholastic achievement statement that says there is an obligation, as a Board, to treat and take care of every student in the District. He believes that this program is still preferentially directing or allocating resources to special needs kids over the entire district-wide needs for students. He felt that instead of increasing the hours, the capacity to take in general students could be increased into the time frame that currently exists. This would serve more students. Dr. Taylor understands the increased demands on kindergarteners and the opportunity that pre-K affords them. He reiterated that he felt this was a preferential choice to allocate money into this area rather than other areas.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the salary at the high end would be \$60,000 and the materials and supplies would be completely covered with the tuition. Mrs. Petrella asked for the costs separated out and the income separate. Dr. Veronesi reviewed that the materials and supplies would be \$30,000. Dr. Taylor believed that this is about the prioritization of the District's resources and not a specific dollar amount. He doesn't see why we wouldn't take that money and spread it out over other opportunities and other students. He reiterated that a significant portion of the budget goes to one population of students and if we are pushing for improving scores and testing for all students, the resources should go to all students.

Mr. Augur commented that he would use all the same words as Dr. Taylor, then replace the words special ed with integrated. Mr. Augur believes that that is also something the Board should look hard at as well.

Dr. Veronesi stated that the prioritization that's being talked about is exactly what was done. The trained and skilled educational leaders made the decision to move this forward and have allocated the resources across the budget in a way that is meeting the District's priorities. As a team, they believed that they can address the needs of students in several different ways. The group of three- and four-year-olds that are coming in need a very specialized approach. Scott Sadinsky looked at the population in the middle school and found that some students need help in math, but instead of adding an interventionist, the team looked at how to rearrange a math teacher's schedule so she can serve in that role. Dr. Veronesi feels that the District needs to deeply look at the math curriculum and math coaches are helping the teachers to be more skilled. The interventionists are really to help kids who are not meeting the benchmarks. The need for interventionists should decrease as the classroom teaching gets stronger. The administrative team believes that expansion of the pre-K program is a type of intervention as well.

Dr. Veronesi explained that transition is very difficult for three- and four-year olds and it would never be their recommendation to have more students in a shorter period of time. To have the educational benefit,

they would prioritize a smaller group of students in a longer period of time. This investment will impact kids all the way, K through 12.

Mrs. Boyle asked Dr. Veronesi to explain what the extended day would be and Dr. Veronesi explained that the four-year-olds would have a full day of school and the three-year-olds would have a 4:10 day. Currently, it is a 2:30 day. Buses are run for the special needs students.

Mrs. Boyle then asked about the \$60,000 salary and Dr. Veronesi explained that the \$60,000 would be for the .6 staff, one staff member. Mrs. Boyle would like to see the whole number and wanted to know if this entire expansion would cost the budget an increase of \$41,500 as an all-in number. Dr. Veronesi explained that transportation costs are already in place, but they could drop one bus with this plan. Mrs. Boyle felt that she didn't have enough information and thought that the District already has a program and while she may want to do this and it would be a great program for the kids, this may be the year to hit the pause button and create a \$41,500 budget savings right now.

Dr. Veronesi commented that if the Board were to ask her to bring the budget down by another \$40,000, she would work on that but not touch the pre-K program. At this point, the administrative team has been able to make reductions that haven't diminished the programming. Dr. Taylor interpreted that by saying that this is at the top of Dr. Veronesi's priority list and if the Board were to make a cut, she would like to be from somewhere else. Dr. Veronesi would like to protect the programming that exists and that the team has put forth.

Dr. Taylor stated that he is for the programming and agrees that early intervention is important. He would just like the money to come from somewhere else in the Special Ed budget so that it can be used for other purposes, such as a math interventionist or technology. Dr. Veronesi felt that the Special Education budget has an impact on all kids.

Mr. Renninghoff agreed with what Dr. Taylor and Mr. Augur have said and he reminded the Board of a comment that a parent had made about being told to move to Durham because of the Special Ed program. Mr. Renninghoff felt that that was not something that the District should be proud of in the sense that we've become a magnet. Part of the audit process of Special Ed was to show that we were top-heavy on Special Ed administration and that a lot of programs were offered that comparable schools did not. Mr. Renninghoff also felt that the preschool program does have a focus on Special Ed and is going to create an even more powerful magnetic effect for people to bring their special needs children here.

Mrs. Petrella confirmed that the preschool program for children who are identified is mandated; therefore it is not set up to be open for all students. Opening the program up to all children doesn't fit the criteria. Mrs. Petrella also read about a court case that had to do with a special ed student who was not getting services in the public school and the parents were now asking for the public school to pay for private school. The Supreme Court agreed with the parents and the school system now has to pay for the private school. Mrs. Petrella told a story of a student she had contact with while teaching who made great progress. She feels that early intervention is extremely critical.

Regarding the comment from the parent about moving to the District, Dr. Veronesi stated that every district says that their district is attracting parents who have students with special needs.

Mrs. Boyle does not want this budget session to turn into Special Ed vs. regular ed, but did state that she has never looked at the section of the book on Pupil Personnel. There are 53 pages in the budget book that deal specifically with Special Ed. Mrs. Boyle realizes that a lot of it is state-mandated and fixed costs and has always just accepted that. Mrs. Boyle is still looking for reductions in the budget and asked Dr.

Veronesi if she can find an additional cut that may come out of the Special Ed portion that helps to balance this expense. Mrs. Boyle questioned the bank error.

Mrs. Boyle also commented that she was appalled when a teacher stated he didn't have online versions of textbooks when the District is spending so much on technology. Everyone says that the priority needs to be on educating the kids. Mrs. Boyle would like to know if that can be done and that there might be other places that can be cut, possibly in administration or Central Office. She'd like to see another \$100,000, but would want to hear from the administrative team.

Dr. Veronesi does go through the Pupil Personnel section and when the administrators sat with her, the biggest cuts came from that section. Dr. Veronesi stated that there is not a line item in the budget that she has not looked into. Dr. Veronesi also felt that administrators absolutely impact the classroom. Strong instructional leadership impacts what happens in classrooms. The District is trying to reduce the fragmentation and variability that exists in the schools. Dr. Veronesi also mentioned that if the Board gave her direction on a particular cut, she would go back to the team.

Mr. Moore stated that he had asked Mr. Hicks and Mr. Yamartino what their priorities in the budget were and now knows one of Mrs. Boyle's priorities. Mr. Moore felt that he could support middle school sports, the extended pre-K and also thinks that they need to find a way to get more math intervention and assistance. He also believes that STEM needs to be expanded and there should be a talented and gifted program. There should be current languages taught, such as Chinese or Arabic. These are all things that affect our lives in the future and our kids graduate without those skills, yet we are looking to take away.

Mr. Moore also mentioned that if the Board adds pay-to-play that would need to be voted on since it was taken out as a vote last year. If the Board is proposing tuition for three- and four-year old programs, they would need to vote on that. The other cuts that have been made do not need to be voted on individually. Mr. Moore would like to at least get the pay-to-participate vote tonight as well as tuition for the three- and four-year-olds.

Dr. Taylor would be more in favor of increasing the budget by adding the math interventionist and a new tech person. Dr. Veronesi would not recommend adding the tech integration specialist. With the shift to more STEM/STEAM programming, the administrative team agreed to hit the pause button on technology and changed the priority to a math interventionist. The population at Strong School is really diminishing and sixth grade may be moved there. There would be a reduction and repurposing of staff.

Mr. Augur stated that the reality of the declining population is another factor that needs to be taken into account. He is worried about class sizes in the two different programs and keeping the classes even.

Mrs. Boyle reminded the Board that they need to give Dr. Veronesi direction to night to make any cuts so she can return on Monday night with a final version of the budget. In the past, the Board has asked the Superintendent to cut a certain amount of money from the budget.

Mr. Renninghoff agreed, but also felt that the Board members could make some decisions on their own. He asked about support staff salaries for Central Office that have an increase of \$64,000. Dr. Veronesi believed that that is shifting the Korn School secretarial position to Central Office as well as the .5 tech person, but she will check with Tippi Popp. He also felt that the before- and after-school program will require its own administrative person at some point.

Mrs. Boyle recalls getting phone calls from employees in the District saying that Mr. Renninghoff was correct about the Director of Organization Development needing to have a secretary. Mrs. Boyle was also

under the impression that, when Korn School was closed, all support staff positions went away. At that time, she also checked with three other Board members who also did not recall that position being proposed. Mrs. Boyle also recalled that when Dr. Berry was hired, no secretary was hired. She stated that the District just cannot afford all the support staff and she would be looking for a cut somewhere in that.

Mr. Renninghoff also mentioned that the disposition of Korn School to the Town of Durham was discussed in last night's executive session and one thing that was discussed had to do with what to do with the building in the interim. There are ongoing expenses with keeping the building open and one-time expenses having to do with the disposition of it. Mr. Renninghoff would propose to put the building into a deep sleep with no more before- and after-care there, no more recreation programs and no more District staff. He felt that line item could be cut in half. As for the one-time expenses, he felt that the \$66,750 should be cut out of the budget.

Dr. Taylor reminded everyone that Dr. Veronesi has already had to make hard choices when presenting this budget and would like the Board to consider re-introducing some of the cuts Dr. Veronesi made while making cuts in other areas. He is not comfortable with selecting an artificial number to get to and he felt that the Middlefield Board of Finance showed disregard for the Board of Education and the work it does. Dr. Taylor felt that a 1 percent reduction is an arbitrary choice. He does not like that this discussion is only focusing on cuts and feels that the Board is losing the focus of trying to direct the District in the best way. In the future, he feels like the Board should ask Dr. Veronesi to come in really high, with everything she'd like to see, and then the Board can make cuts down to a level that is reasonable.

Mr. Augur directed everyone to page 13, Lyman School, showing 88 total students in five classes. He thought that there could be four classes at 22 per class. Mr. Augur would suggest repurposing and agrees with a math interventionist.

Mrs. Petrella acknowledged Dr. Veronesi's effort on this budget and trusts her decisions. Mrs. Petrella feels comfortable with one math interventionist if Dr. Veronesi feels that is sufficient. Dr. Veronesi liked Mr. Augur's idea about classes at Lyman School and felt that she is on the same side as the Board and that is the side of the kids. Mrs. Boyle stated that she would always want to cut support staff before cutting a teacher.

There was some discussion about the Athletic Director and what certification is required. Mr. Renninghoff mentioned that the law requires athletic directors in a regional school district will need to hold either a certificate endorsed for intermediate administration or supervision and a coaching permit or a certificate issued by a National Athletics Administrators Association as approved by the Department of Education. Dr. Veronesi understood that the District was trying to hire an athletic director and wasn't successful with the salary that was proposed. The salary was increased and the job requirements changed to require an 092 and the responsibilities increased to include supervision and evaluation of the health and phys ed staff. Mrs. Flanagan stated that that was done in response to the legislation that Mr. Renninghoff quoted.

Dr. Veronesi stated that they have talked about it and she believes that this should be looked at during contract negotiations with the administrators next year. Mrs. Flanagan stated that contract discussions can be opened if the administrators are willing and we don't necessarily have to wait until the expiration of the contract.

Mrs. Petrella asked about cutting the activity fees at the high school and thought they could be re-instituted. Mr. Moore received a letter from Oanh Stephan regarding the music programs that pay for their own travel and uniforms. There is a small line item for transportation for the music department.

Mrs. Boyle commented that she's had a few people approach her about punishing the athletes with pay-to-play and thought that it should be considered for other programs, including sports, clubs and music activities. Dr. Taylor's concern would be that the cost of sports are significant in comparison to clubs. Mrs. Boyle felt it could be done on a sliding scale that could be decided on by the administration. Mrs. Flanagan didn't like the idea of charging for extracurricular activities that are really just a stipend and feels that the sports have a lot more impact on the budget.

Mr. Moore asked if the Board was ready to vote to pay-to-play for sports back into the budget and set a price.

Mrs. Flanagan made a motion to put pay-to-play for sports back into the budget at \$100 per sport, with a maximum of \$200 per athlete.

There was discussion about maximum per student and maximum per family and Mrs. Boyle asked for the decision to be tabled until Monday. She would like more information about the theater activities as well. Dr. Veronesi would like the Board to move forward with the pay-to-play for athletics and give the administration more time to research the other activities.

Dr. Taylor asked if the Board voted on a pay-to-play, would that be canceling the intramural expansion and reinstating interscholastic sports. It was generally agreed that that is a separate topic and would not require a vote as it is part of the budget. Dr. Taylor just wanted to be clear that the Board is agreeing that interscholastic sports stays and there will be a pay-to-play fee.

Mrs. Flanagan clarified that her motion was to reinstate pay-to-play for athletes at \$100 per sport, with a maximum of \$200 per athlete per year. Mrs. Boyle would also like to add a family cap. Mrs. Flanagan agreed to a family cap of \$400 per year. Mr. Augur seconded the motion.

It was confirmed that this fee would include Strong School and the high school. Mrs. Boyle asked if the District would come up with a sliding scale or a means for volunteer donations and Dr. Veronesi stated that she had reached out to legal counsel today as to how donations could work.

In favor of reinstating pay-to-play for athletes at \$100 per sport, with a maximum of \$200 per athlete per year and a maximum of \$400 per family per year: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor. Opposed: Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed 6-1.

Mr. Moore also asked for a vote on the pre-K program at this time.

Dr. Veronesi asked Mrs. Flanagan if the expansion of pre-K with a tuition component would require a vote as it is part of the budget proposal and Mrs. Flanagan stated that she would not have anticipated a need to vote on that and that it would be part of the budget implementation. Dr. Veronesi will check with legal counsel on that issue.

Mr. Moore explained that the Board has yet to decide if the program should be instituted as well as the tuition issue. He felt that setting tuition should be done by a positive vote. It was also discussed that they could be done as separate votes.

Mrs. Boyle made a motion to institute tuition for typical peers in the pre-K program, at a dollar value set by the Superintendent as appropriate. Mr. Augur seconded the motion.

In favor of instituting tuition for typical peers in the pre-K program, at a dollar value set by the Superintendent as appropriate: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor. Opposed: Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed 6-1.

Mr. Moore summarized that the Board will evaluate specific cuts proposed by Mr. Renninghoff between now and Monday and Mrs. Boyle has given direction to the Superintendent to find anything else. Dr. Taylor would like to find a way to increase the budget for instructional costs and Mr. Augur suggested repurposing a teacher.

Dr. Taylor explained that he would specifically be looking for an addition, not repurposing. He felt there were downsides to repurposing, such as class sizes rising.

Mr. Moore went on to summarize that Mrs. Petrella would like to see any cuts possible in administration and Central Office.

Mrs. Flanagan had to leave the meeting at this point.

Mrs. Boyle would also like to ask for more clarification of the before- and after-school program which does have some impact on the budget. She feels this would be expanding our school district, much like MTA. Mrs. Boyle implored the Board to focus on educating the kids and not burdening the administrators to provide daycare. Mrs. Boyle has a major concern with the special ed component of the before- and after-school program. Mrs. Boyle strongly felt that this was not something the District should get into and felt that it was not fair to the businesses in town.

Mr. Renninghoff commented on the tax situations in the State and stated that the District would be losing \$10,000 in rent that BASREP currently pays. Mr. Renninghoff had suggested that Korn School be closed, but also suggested that BASREP be moved to one of the other schools. Mr. Renninghoff is comfortable with continuing MTA as it is a viable program.

Mr. Renninghoff also commented that he doesn't see any workers' compensation premiums for the before- and after-school employees. He also questioned how we can budget interns for \$9.60 an hour when minimum wage is \$10.10 an hour. Mr. Renninghoff does not feel the before- and after-school program is financially viable and agrees with Mrs. Boyle on the special ed component. He summarized that he is not in favor of the program at all and does not feel he ever will be.

Mr. Augur agreed with Mrs. Boyle and Mr. Renninghoff and did not feel that the District should be competing with private enterprise. He also felt it did not specifically account for overhead expenses or administration. Mr. Augur is not in favor of the program.

Dr. Veronesi explained that they were looking to provide a high quality of care and there are 95 people who have said they are interested. She feels that if those parents thought that BASREP was a viable option, they would be enrolled there. She is not trying to criticize the program, but the number of kids enrolled does not come near the interest that the District has received.

Mr. Augur reminded Dr. Veronesi that it is not just BASREP and there are several alternatives. Mr. Renninghoff asked why it should be the Board's problem to provide before- and after-school care. Mr. Renninghoff felt that the parents need to figure out a way and that it is not incumbent upon the school

board of the municipality to provide that care. Mrs. Petrella felt parents do have opportunities for daycare outside of the school system.

Dr. Taylor would like to add one more math interventionist to the budget. He also asked about how we can eliminate a technology person when it is moving so quickly. Dr. Veronesi explained that they had reduced that position because they felt like they can address the present needs and wanted to take time to look at how technology is integrated. Dr. Taylor is hearing from teachers that there is a significant need. Dr. Veronesi agrees that there is a need and that they need to reexamine how it is being met. Mrs. Boyle would like to see the Board not include the IT person's position, but see what other positions could be filled. Mrs. Boyle reiterated that she did not feel comfortable telling Dr. Veronesi what to cut.

Communications

Mr. Moore had received a couple of letters. Mr. Renninghoff explained that he had received a message during the meeting from a constituent who is very disappointed in him voting no on the field house.

Public Comment

Chuck Stengel thanked all of the Board members for having a difficult discussion.

Christine Geraci, from Durham, stated that she had been in budget meetings all day with her Board and they had Dr. Michael Powers from CT Center for Special Needs address them. They were speaking about training staff to become behavioral techs who are assistants in ABA classes. Dr. Powers stated that the foundation always starts in preschool and if they are not prepared there, they will end up getting outsourced. Mrs. Geraci stated that, by the end of the year, there will be 20 students in preschool and her daughter receives only half an hour in class because of her special therapies. Mrs. Geraci also stated that she would have no problem paying tuition for a full day structured program for her peer student, but would have a problem with paying it for the current two-and-a-half hours of daycare. She also pointed out that Wallingford has a full-day four-year-old program. Mrs. Geraci pointed out that outsourcing one of the kids in the pre-K program is equal to the cost of this whole program. In terms of before- and after-care, everybody makes a choice whether to work or not but she felt that it would be a nice thing to offer to young families. Mrs. Geraci also stated that she and her husband will donate \$1,000 for supplies for the preschool program, not to be used for anything else.

Donia Viola felt that the discussion tonight was wonderful, but she does feel that bids need to take place for the bus contracts. It may also be wise to get bids on outsourcing school lunches for comparison. Mrs. Viola is not surprised that a secretary was hired for the Director of Organizational Development and felt that these things need to be checked. She also mentioned that the State requires a child start school at age 5 in kindergarten, but special needs comes into play for youngsters three and up. Mrs. Viola did not feel that extending the program will make much difference as the children that age don't have that big an attention span. She does feel that the quality matters more than the time. Mrs. Viola believes that it is up to us to make a difference and that should start at home.

Christine Geraci, from Durham, stated that she is very passionate about her child and that half an hour is not adequate for her child to learn. She explained that her child can sit for speech therapy for an hour. There isn't time in the day to teach everything that should be taught. Mrs. Geraci stated that they do more than can be imagined for their child, but it is not just up to the parents. It is up to the Board to provide an adequate education and it is required by law that the special needs children are in with peer students.

Teresa Opalacz, from Durham, wanted to understand what part of the preschool is mandatory and it was explained that the proposal is to make it a full day. She then asked how many other schools provide that type of program. Dr. Veronesi will send her a chart with this information. Ms. Opalacz is sensitive to providing something that is not mandatory and that other surrounding schools do not provide. Her second question was if a charge can be made for that program and it was explained that the District cannot charge for an identified student, but can charge for peer students. Ms. Opalacz wondered if that applies to a program that is more than what is mandated as well.

Mr. Augur and Mr. Renninghoff interpreted Ms. Opalacz's question to be if the District provides anything above what is legally required to be offer, can the District charge for that additional service. Dr. Veronesi did not believe you can charge for special needs students.

Ms. Opalacz also supported what Mrs. Boyle had said about understanding the complete costs for the preschool.

Dr. Veronesi commented that it was challenging for the administrator when BASREP was in Korn School because the administrator was very involved with assisting with the program. She pointed out that that would be a consideration for the District going forward and that Korn School would no longer be an option.

Ms. Opalacz also asked if other school districts are running at a loss in their lunch programs. Ms. Opalacz would also like to know what the math teacher from the high school wants and what we are not providing. She believed that part of the benefit to the Chromebooks would be having the textbooks online.

Christine Geraci explained that she contacted the State today with regard to programs and was told that they didn't know of any other programs besides Early Intervention and preschool would be the option. There is no mandate on time for preschool, but what the child needs per their IEP.

Carl Stroup reiterated that the before- and after-school program is not something that we need to get involved in. He believes the families should have a choice of where to go to preschool. He also stated that he was never in favor of hiring the new administrator last year as there are limited resources.

Adjournment

Mrs. Boyle made a motion, seconded by Mr. Renninghoff, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First