

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, October 11, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

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

Board members absent: Mrs. Boyle and Dr. Taylor.

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.

### **Administrators Welcome**

Mr. Falcone welcomed the board and updated them on the NEASC accreditation process that the high school is currently involved in. CRHS completed an intensive self-study from May 2011 to November 2012 (nineteen months) which involved a visiting committee of sixteen people evaluated Coginchaug over a four day period in March 2013 followed by the NEASC Accreditation Report in October of 2013. The high school completed the two-year progress report in October 2015 and is currently completing the five-year progress report that is due in March 2018. There are a total of 49 NEASC recommendations that need to be evaluated and responded to for the five year report.

Mr. Falcone presented Mr. Thompson and three student reporters to speak to the board about the Career Center.

Seamus Doyle explained that he had reached out to Mr. Falcone and Mr. Thompson about the Career Center last year because he is interested in chemistry and physics and wanted to obtain an internship in chemical engineering to help him set his direction for college.

Colleen Coogan knew that she wanted to major in psychology, but didn't know what she would do with that after college. She was very interested in internships to help her narrow down what she wanted to.

Daniel Turecek doesn't know what he wants to major in yet and felt that a Career Center would be beneficial for him to help him find a career that he might want to pursue.

Mr. Thompson explained that the Career Center would help bridge students to future careers that they would want to pursue after high school. Mr. Thompson graduated from Coginchaug and didn't really have a direction in college. He chose his major on the last day of his sophomore year of college and feels that that was due to the fact that he had not been exposed to a lot of opportunities to prepare him for life after high school. They are trying to expose students to as many opportunities and needed skills, including collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking. It would also help students develop an awareness of their personal abilities, including skills, interests and motivations.

The Career Center program starts with having students complete an interest inventory and will then help with resume writing, in-person interviews and phone interviews. This will be done in coordination with the STEAM coordinator. Field experience will consist of roughly 20 hours per semester in a job shadow program. The students will maintain a bi-weekly journal and conduct research in the field. The program would culminate in a project that would include a career fair presentation. Mr. Thompson explained that they are looking to pilot the program with students next semester and would like to see about half of the

senior class participate each semester. Mr. Falcone also commented that the career fair will help the students share their experiences and goals with their parents and he hopes to have high school parents provide opportunities for job shadowing. They will then reach out to middle school parents for job shadowing opportunities. This model was used at Valley Regional High School and they have a great program with career partners. The goal would be to develop programs at the high school that can help the career partners with things such as website and apps.

Mr. Roraback asked if they have reached out to the community at large to see if there is a need. He mentioned that he graduated from Coginchaug in 1984 and there had been a work study program as well as a consortium program. He had participated in a culinary program at Haddam-Killingworth and found the travel time impacted his class time at Coginchaug. Mr. Falcone explained that they will look at the amount of classes the seniors are taking during the semester that they are in the career program. He also explained that this aligns with the NEASC recommendations.

Mr. Yamartino asked what screening process will be in place for companies who participate and Mr. Falcone explained that they are working on that right now. He also stated that parents will sign off on where the students will go. Dr. Veronesi also commented that they are working with Shipman on a policy/protocol for this.

Mr. Moore asked if the board needed to participate in the NEASC progress report, but Mr. Falcone explained that that is for the teachers to do. Mr. Thompson stated that they used board of education minutes for the last NEASC progress report. Mr. Yamartino asked if there were other organizations that can do the accreditation with maybe less demands and less expense. Mr. Falcone explained that NEASC will be sending 16 people in and the budget for that will grow significantly. Mr. Falcone did not know what other organizations could do the accreditation, but Mr. Augur stated that there were five other organizations nationally that we should possibly reach out to. Mr. Roraback concurred and explained that he has dealt with about five different accrediting agencies in the culinary realm.

### **CRHS Reporters - Colleen Coogan, Demarie Del Vecchio, Daniel Turecek**

Colleen Coogan reported that Coginchaug is hosting the 2017 Shoreline Music Festival concert tomorrow night which features selected students from a number of schools.

Daniel Turecek reported that next week is homecoming and spirit week. There will be a pep rally on Monday and all of the classes will dress in different colors. National Honor Society is holding a pie throwing event where students can throw pies into teachers' faces. This will be a fund raiser for the Puerto Rico relief efforts. Tuesday will be dress as your favorite teacher day and Wednesday will be dress like a twin day. Thursday is dress like the 60s day and Friday is neon day and the homecoming dance is also a neon theme.

Demarie Del Vecchio reported that the Unified Sports Team hosted a soccer tournament on September 29<sup>th</sup> for four other unified sports teams. All of the fall sports from Coginchaug participated in warm-ups and cheered on the teams.

Daniel Turecek also reported that Haunted Hallways will be on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. This event is put on by the National Honor Society and elementary school students are invited to come between 10:00 and 12:00 and trick-or-treat through the hallways.

### **Public Comment**

None.

**Next Board Meeting - November 8, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School****Approval of Agenda**

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

*In favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.*

**Approval of Minutes - Board of Education Retreat September 6, 2017, Board of Education Meeting September 13, 2017 and Joint Meeting of the Boards of Education, Selectmen and Finance September 13, 2017**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes of board of education retreat on September 6, 2017, as presented.*

Dr. Friedrich was concerned about the statement that Public Comment is a forum for public discussion. Dr. Veronesi stated that it should say it is not a forum for public discussion.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion to add the word not, but Mr. Hicks agreed so there was no motion necessary.

*In favor of approving the minutes of September 6, 2017 as amended: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes of board of education meeting on September 13, 2017, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the board of education regular meeting on September 13, 2017 as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to approve the minutes of the joint meeting of the boards of education, selectmen and finance on September 13, 2017, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the joint meeting of the boards of education, selectmen and finance on September 13, 2017 as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

**Presentation of Durham Middlefield Youth and Family Service Student Surveys - Nina Chanana and Haley Shoop**

Dr. Veronesi had asked the Wellness Coalition to review the survey, why it is done and what is done with the results. Dr. Veronesi felt that this is a fine example of how school districts and local organizations partner together and make good things happen for the community at large.

Betsy Dean, Director of Durham Middlefield Youth and Family Services, introduced herself as well as Haley Shoop, the Prevention Coordinator and Nina Chanana, the evaluator. The Local Wellness Coalition has been existence for 14-15 years and five years ago, they decided to write for a federal grant,

the Drug-Free Communities grant, which they did receive. Part of the requirements for that grant is to survey the middle school and high school students on four core measures. She then played a short video. Nina Chanana reviewed that the Coalition has been working collaboratively with the schools since 2007 and brought in over \$600,000 over the past five years. They have also just received word that they were awarded another five years for the same grant. They were also awarded close to \$200,000 in additional federal grant. Those grant applications would not have been able to be completed without the survey information. Ms. Chanana stated that they work with the Search Institute, based in Minnesota, who have worked with youth for over 50 years and have been surveying youth for over 25 years. The results of these surveys have been validated and are true to what is being measured. Ms. Chanana went on to explain that the Developmental Asset framework is used and the questions look to strengths and supports for the youth and how it will support them in school and in the future.

Ms. Chanana reviewed the four core measures which are around attitudes and substance use. Questions include how harmful young people think using a substance is, what they perceive their parents' disapproval to be, what they perceive their peers' disapproval to be. These answers help to measure success and indicators of prevention efforts. The Coalition also adds questions around perceptions of access to substances, mental health, trusted adults and information that drives the prevention work.

This year, a video will be created to show students so that all information is the same, including detailed instructions. The surveys are completely anonymous and no student is required to complete them. The data will not be released until it is seen by the superintendent and school administration. The summary report will be shared with the board once they are comfortable with the information. Parents will then be given a two-week period to provide a written opt-out if they do not want their student to participate in the survey.

A small working group will then be formed to talk about what the data is showing and how it should inform their work. Ms. Chanana states that, from past information, they know that marijuana use is going down, but use rates across the state and country are going up.

Haley Shoop showed some examples of what the Coalition does. The data does show that the majority of students are not using substances. They have done sticker attacks at liquor stores, a marijuana awareness campaign and have recently heard that vaping and e-cigarette use is an area of concern. They will look to keep the Keep Your Focus campaign going and infusing vaping and e-cigarette messaging. There is a prescription drug card and a billboard which is on Main Street.

Ms. Dean explained that the survey has been shortened and should be able to be completed in under 20 minutes. Dr. Veronesi also reminded the board members that a copy of the survey is in their packet. The survey will be done online. Dr. Veronesi also commented that the district has fabulous students, but they are at as great a risk as anyone else for substance use. She does believe that this support and information really makes a difference. Ms. Chanana stated that they are very positive results across the board and both alcohol and marijuana use are going down. She commented that marijuana use rates are typically going up in other communities.

Mr. Yamartino congratulated them on obtaining the grants and asked if the new grant takes effect so that bridge funding is not necessary. It was explained that it will not be needed this year.

### **Temporary Lights for Athletic Field Event**

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that Nick Faiella, the Benchwarmers and the Coginchaug Football Club have asked about the possibility of having a game under temporary lights. She also noted that she has spoken

with Karen Cheyney who indicated that she would be willing to work with the district to allow the game under temporary lights. Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. Cheyney are scheduled to meet tomorrow morning.

The cost of the temporary lighting will be assumed by the groups and not the school district. Gate receipts will be used to pay for game workers and troopers. With homecoming week next week, they are looking at the possibility of a girls soccer game on Thursday night, a football game on Friday night and some other sports clubs having a game as well. If next week is not possible, senior game is on November 11<sup>th</sup> and they are hoping to reschedule that game from to the 10<sup>th</sup>, which would be a Friday night.

Nick Faiella stated that the anticipated gate for a night game would be quite a bit larger than a Saturday game. The adult fee at the gate will be \$5.00 and the student rate is \$3.00. Dr. Veronesi explained that the approximate cost for the night would be \$1,700 with anticipated gate receipts of over \$2,000. Mrs. Petrella asked that records be kept of the expenses vs. income for any future events.

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to grant permission to have a football game under temporary lighting, as the schedule permits.*

*In favor of granting permission for a football game under temporary lighting: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

### **Communications**

Mr. Moore reported that after last meeting's discussion about using Korn School for basketball, use of the other schools was evaluated and he wrote a letter to Laura Francis offering the options of Lyman or Brewster.

Dr. Veronesi also stated she wrote letters to state legislators reminding them of the significant budget impact on schools. Dr. Veronesi has heard from Noreen Kokaruda, Len Fasano and Buddy Altobello as well as Len Suzio who have all stated that they are working on our behalf.

### **Business Manager's Report**

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that diesel fuel had been locked in at \$2.05 and fuel oil at \$1.97 through the consortium to August 31, 2018. She also mentioned that DMV has a website where Dattco is supposed to check twice a month on suspended or revoked licenses of its drivers. The district has also received permission to check this website as well. The revenue and expense information is in the board's packets and there is nothing remarkable to report.

Mrs. Neubig had a meeting today regarding incentives for retrofitting LED lighting and energy conservation. There are some funding sources available and she will investigate those.

Mrs. Neubig also asked to have a motion made to add her as the second person authorized to sign claims to the national school lunch program.

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to add Kimberly Neubig, Business Manager, as the second person authorized to sign claims for reimbursement for the ED-099 Agreement of Child Nutrition Programs for the Connecticut State Department of Education.*

*In favor of adopting the above motion: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.*

Mrs. Neubig also reported an electronic version of the budget has been submitted to the administrators and is due back by December 1, 2017. All areas will be looked at to save money.

The auditors have been here and are wrapping up the field work. The final audit report should be available in December. The audit will be presented to the ERC committee in January and then to the board for final approval.

Mr. Yamartino asked if the official October 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment was available and Mrs. Neubig reported that it is 1,649 students. Mrs. Neubig did not have the allocation for each town available. Dr. Veronesi reminded the board that the November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting will be abbreviated so that there can be a joint meeting with the boards of finance and boards of selectmen and she hoped that that information would be available at that point.

Mr. Hicks reported that the district's enrollment at TEMS is four students which looks to be different than what was reported.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Veronesi mentioned that even though it was never meant to be part of budget discussions last year, the Before and After Care proposal had been talked about. At that time, the board decided not to move forward with that proposal. It was also decided to pilot the STEAM camp for one session and it will be run on October 23, 2017 at Brewster, Memorial and Lyman. It has been opened to 22 students in each session which filled very quickly. The students will be split into groups of five and rotate through five STEAM-type activities. Each student was charged \$30 and will be staffed by three paraprofessionals and a certified staff member at each session. In addition, three high school students will be at each session where they will earn community service hours.

Dr. Veronesi also followed up about the Utilization Committee meeting regarding maximization of existing space and minimization of potential financial output. She also reached out to Silver Petrucelli who came up with a new proposal to continue the work that had been done previously and to particularly look at the high school. One item in the proposal is how to use the facilities so that it will enhance effective implementation of new and existing initiatives. This proposal is for \$19,000 to continue their work and she will bring the proposal to the Utilization Committee for recommendation to the full board and she will forward a copy to all board members.

Mrs. Petrella asked if this was in the budget and Dr. Veronesi explained that it had not been budgeted for this year but she is hopeful that there will be some negotiating room in the proposal.

Dr. Veronesi also had included an overview of the strategic coherence plan, including the mission statement, at Mrs. Boyle's request. Dr. Veronesi believes that the essence of what the district is trying to do comes through in the new mission statement. A mission statement is written and district goals are created from that. From those district goals, schools create their school learning plans and the superintendent, administrators and certified staff write their goals from there. Dr. Veronesi suggested that waiting until all members of the board were present at the next board meeting for a vote would be appropriate.

### **Presentation of District-Wide Test Results - Cori-Ann DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

Dr. Veronesi thanked the Student Achievement Committee for their work on this and Dr. Friedrich reminded the board that when he joined that committee, there was no more history because all of the

testing had changed. This is now year three for the testing and history is now becoming available once again.

Cori-Ann DiMaggio also thanked the Student Achievement Committee for their feedback. She began by explaining that she will talk about student achievement scores, growth model scores and review the Connecticut growth model and what that looks like. She also emphasized that it's important to look at what the district is currently doing and what needs to be done in the future to promote student achievement and growth.

Mrs. DiMaggio began by looking at performance and explained that achievement change had been looked at in the past. As an example, the district would look at third grade students in years 2015 and 2016 and at third grade students in 2016 and 2017. This was truly comparing apples to oranges. They then began to look at a rough cohort change which is vertical alignment and students in grades three in 2015 and 2016 to students in grade four in 2016/17. This was then seen as similar students from year to year, but not quite the same students. Last year, Connecticut came out with a growth model which began in 2014 looking at the same cohort of students over time.

Mrs. DiMaggio showed where the district is within the DRG for grades three through eight for ELA and literacy from last year's SBAC tests. The district's highest achievement scores are in grades five and seven which are also above the DRG average. Student performance does not decrease during transition grades (going from one school to another).

In math, overall performance in the state was higher than in ELA. She again showed the district scores as compared to the DRG for grades three through eight. The district's highest achievement scores are in grades four and six with decreases during transition grades. Grade five scored above the DRG average.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed the ELA and literacy common core skills that are measured which include reading, writing, listening, research and inquiry. In math, there are concepts of procedures, problem solving, communicating and reasoning, modeling and data analysis. Mr. Moore commented that grade five was the smallest class last year, with 117 enrolled.

Looking at the Smarter Balanced Growth Model, Mrs. DiMaggio emphasized that educators look far more at the growth than the achievement score. Student reports have been sent to parents and Mrs. DiMaggio showed a video explaining what is on those reports. She hopes to provide the link to the video in the Superintendent's Newsletter.

She moved on to explain the ELA achievement level ranges and growth targets which include not met, approaching, met and exceeded, with low and high in each category. Scale scores and cut points are also included as well as target scores. Mrs. DiMaggio then gave an example of a third grade student and emphasized that the district wants every child to have growth. This same type of system is used in math.

The percentage of target achieved is also reported on an individual level. The achievement cannot be lower than 0 and cannot be higher than 110 percent. Looking at the district's number compared to the DRG, she showed the scores for grades four through eight. Students across the state made less growth in ELA and literacy than in math. Students made more growth from 2014/15 to 2015/16. Students experience a decrease during the transition years from grade six to seven.

Mrs. DiMaggio then showed math growth results with percentage of target achieved. Mr. Yamartino wondered how the DRG average compared to the rest of the state. Mrs. DiMaggio did feel that we are in a competitive DRG. Dr. Veronesi explained that there are A through I DRGs and she felt that the higher the DRG, the higher the DRG average. We are in DRG C, the third highest DRG.

Dr. Friedrich felt that the data was very informative, but was concerned about whether some parents were being set up for disappointment because of the rationale for the math. We cannot all be above average. He feels that the formative data is absolutely brilliant, but would approach the summative data with caution. Mrs. DiMaggio felt that everyone can grow. Dr. Veronesi explained that they will get back to Dr. Friedrich with the specific formula for growth predictions and what data is used. Mrs. DiMaggio said that the State has looked at the data over time and were able to come with scales and cut scores through the data, but she will research it further and get back to the board.

Mrs. Geraci asked if the district was just focusing on growth and wondered if she should be looking at scores or growth. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that it is harder to achieve growth when your scores are higher. The growth model becomes more important when looking at individual student scores. Dr. Veronesi felt that they are still grappling with how to determine the data.

Mr. Yamartino felt that the targets are being set consistently and we can compare how we are doing over time and against other school districts. Dr. Friedrich felt it was important to note that our goal is not for all students to be above average. Mrs. DiMaggio felt that it held school districts accountable for helping to make sure all students grow.

Mr. Augur confirmed that the results that parents just received were from testing done in the spring of 2016 and wondered why it took so long to get results. Mrs. DiMaggio commented that the district gets the results during the summer but did not get the parent reports until September.

Mrs. DiMaggio continued to review results and then moved on to the Student Achievement Test (SAT) which is done at the high school. For ELA, the State is at 65.4 percent and 41.3 percent in math. District 13 students are at 90.5 percent in ELA and 61.1 percent in math, both of which are well above the state average. She then showed the scores in relation to the DRG and stated that we are number one in the DRG for ELA. Some of the schools are missing from this information and Mrs. DiMaggio was told by the state that that was for privacy reasons.

PSAT and SAT scores were shown and growth was also measured. These scores were also quite good. Science, CMT and CAPT scores showed that 76.5 percent of district students in grade five were at goal or advanced. In grade eight, it was 82 percent and in grade 10, 50.4 percent on the CAPT. Overall in the state, the numbers went down in grades five and 10. Everyone feels that teachers have changed their approach to lean more toward the Next Generation science standards and were not practicing the CAPT as much.

The district is shifting its mind set in teaching and learning and looking at 100 percent growth model, aligning all of the curriculum, instruction and assessments to the Common Core and not to the standards, developing a growth-based strategic plan and student improvement plans and aligning focused student-learning outcomes to improvement plans. The implications for the district are to continue to provide professional development and use inquiry-based learning. The district needs to look at all of the assessments that are used and continue to write and revise curriculum, address school schedules and continue to build capacity throughout the district. The district's goal is for 100 percent of its students to achieve growth, but how much growth has not been identified.

Mr. Yamartino wondered if the district would want to set a target in relation to the DRG at some point. Dr. Veronesi felt that we should use the correct measure and set the right district targets. She felt that past targets have sometimes been arbitrary and we should be setting realistic, but rigorous targets. Dr. Friedrich expressed that they would like all of the district's students to meet state standards,



but wondered what percentage is reasonable. Mrs. Petrella also felt that practical skills need to be taken into account.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **A. Student Achievement Committee - September 27, 2017**

Dr. Friedrich had nothing more to add after the test results presentation.

#### **B. Utilization Committee - September 28, 2017**

Mr. Augur reported that they settled on a mission and a focus: the mission of the Utilization Committee is to maximize efficient use of resources, including flexible space, while meeting the programmatic needs as determined by the administration. With that mission, Dr. Veronesi had her discussion with Silver Petrucelli. They also reviewed long-term capital needs.

#### **C. Educational Resources Committee/State Budget Update - October 11, 2017**

Mr. Moore reported that the committee met before this meeting and focused on capital needs, both short-term and long-term. They also had a presentation on bonding capabilities over the next couple of years.

### **Public Comment**

Carl Stoup, from Durham, was happy to hear the direction that the Utilization Committee seems to be going in, but wondered about the future of Strong School.

Melissa Booth, from Durham, stated that her third grader came home weeks ago talking about SBACs. Mrs. Booth also mentioned that the 12:05 PM dismissal is very difficult for parents that work and encouraged the board to look at taking a whole day instead of so many early dismissals. She also felt that that was why the STEAM camp slots filled up so quickly. Mr. Moore had also heard that same comment.

### **Adjournment**

*Norm Hicks made a motion, seconded by Victor Friedrich, to adjourn the regular meeting of the board of education.*

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

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First