

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

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

Board members absent: None

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

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to move item 10, Superintendent's Report, to before item 8, Committee Reports, and approve the agenda, as modified.

In favor of approving the agenda as modified: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Chuck Stengel, a member of the Finance Committee and Durham's Board of Finance, distributed a copy of a letter from Jim Irish to members of the Board. Mr. Stengel wanted to show his support for the ideas presented in Jim Irish's letter. Durham believes the MBR should have been set closer to \$785,000 rather than the \$299,000. They are seeking legislative changes in the calculation language. He commented that the Town Times had misstated that RSD 13's budget reflects the cuts in state aid. Schools and towns are losing state revenue in every possible category and some towns are being hit much harder than others. Durham's projected ECS will decline at an accelerated rate and will go from nearly \$3.9 million to \$1.7 million over 10 years. The Town of Durham was happy to see a zero percent increase in the Superintendent's budget and feels that she has been open with data and made staffing recommendations based on her professional opinion. Mr. Stengel personally supports an SRO, but hopes to keep a zero percent budget. Mr. Irish had provided specific options to be able to do that. Mr. Stengel also explained that education is 77 percent of Durham's budget. In summary, Mr. Stengel supports an SRO, the staffing levels presented by the Superintendent and using the budget suggestions submitted by Mr. Irish.

Catherine Hesseltine, from Durham, has two students at Coginchaug, both of whom plan escape routes from wherever they are in the school. She feels that an SRO should definitely be added in the school system. She wondered what the price tag would be on the kids, faculty and staff. She also asked what the price tag would be if it were children of Board of Ed members. She believes the price tag is whatever it takes to keep them safe.

Jake Hesseltine, a senior at Coginchaug, strongly supports an SRO and described a scenario of gun shots in the hall. He felt they would all hide behind a desk, call 911 and hope they get there within 15-20 minutes. He felt it would be much more efficient to have an officer on the premises at all times and would be very comforting to the students.

Hayden Hurlbert, from Rockfall, agreed it would be wise to have an SRO. After the recent events at Coginchaug, he wasn't sure if he would attend school or not. He felt much safer on the days when the officers were at the school.

Katherine Anecchino, a senior at Coginchaug, asked the Board of Education to consider setting the graduation date for Friday, June 22nd. She is aware that there have been many extra snow days, but she feels that is reasonable to ask the Board to lock in a graduation date. Project Graduation has reserved a sports complex for 6/22/18 and keeping the date would make planning more convenient. She has spoken to many parents and children and there is a general consensus that it is a good option. As of today, the last day of school is Monday, June 25th as opposed to June 12th and that can still change because of weather.

Lou Anecchino stated that they had a lot of family coming from Maine for graduation and also felt it would be helpful to have an exact date for graduation. He also mentioned the effort that is put into planning Project Graduation and encouraged the Board to come up with a creative solution to set a graduation date. He also thanked the Board members for donating their time.

Daanyal Akhtar, a senior at Coginchaug, thanked the Board for letting the students and parents speak. On Friday, March 2nd, he heard people screaming from the other room. They all feared what was happening and it turned out to be a celebration. He hoped no students would ever have to experience that feeling. He mentioned the march on Washington which was entirely student-led. He believes that an SRO would be best utilized at the high school and that students and teachers would be relieved.

Oanh Stephan, from Durham, asked for reinstatement of the music position. As a follow-up to Mr. Yamartino's comments about how the music department could have won the awards they have with inferior equipment, Mrs. Stephan explained that that is because of the talent of the teachers and the students. She thanked the Board for moving forward so quickly with discussions about safety. She also supports the SRO, but can't help but think about the other end of the problem and asked what is being provided for emotional support. A comment was made about teachers who pay attention, can have informal assessments and form bonds with at-risk students and she stressed the fact that research shows that music makes that connection. Mrs. Stephan asked where the music teachers will be when the students need extra help or just want to have conversation. Mrs. Stephan reiterated that she and many other parents will wholeheartedly support the budget with the extra money to reinstate the music position.

Jenna Driscoll, from Durham, fully supports all of the comments made about an SRO. She, too, is concerned about the proposed cut to the music department. She believes that the music department is already spread thin and reminded everyone that excellence in music education is something that identifies this district. Mrs. Driscoll also felt that this is a mere \$36,000 out of a \$36+ million budget. Regarding agenda item 8B, she encouraged the Board to disperse some sort of written communication that outlines the current state of the utilization process. She also mentioned that holding meetings at 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon is a scheduling nightmare for parents with children or parents that work. She thanked the Board for their time and dedication.

Janina Eddinger, from Middlefield, also thanked the Board for their time and effort. She is a parent of six children, ranging from 9 years to 21 months, and her oldest three are at John Lyman. She asked that the Board seriously consider keeping grades K-4 together, at a minimum. Watching the students grow and take charge at board meetings, you want to keep that special place as a whole complete experience. Mrs.

Eddinger understands the ideal classroom sizes, but also believes it would be in the students' best interests to renovate instead of splitting into three schools. She asked the Board to consider more than just the numbers and see the bigger picture.

Kate Finch, from Durham, asked the Board to reconsider the cut to the music program. Mrs. Finch is a classroom teacher in another district and understands the limitations of having more and more kids in a class. She believes it is the art and music teachers who catch the kids who do not necessarily do well in the classroom. She sees the emotional issues that students bring to school. Mrs. Finch also supports having an SRO in the District and doesn't feel that the security in the District is what the students deserve. She acknowledges that the teachers will make it work, but it is hard to pack students in a class and still make the connection. She summarized by asking the Board to reconsider the cut to the music department and, as far as the SRO, stated that it is better to have something you don't need than to need something you don't have.

Another member of the public felt that the students would have someone they could go to before there was an emergency, someone they were comfortable going to and reporting something they saw. Teachers could also refer the SRO to students that they feel may have a problem.

Kim Johanson, from Durham, was also in support of the SRO and the security changes. The fear is in the elementary schools as well.

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Special Meeting - March 9, 2018

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to accept the minutes from the Board of Education Special Meeting on March 9, 2018, as presented.

Dr. Friedrich asked that the sentence at the bottom of the first page, "The decision to appoint an impartial expulsion hearing board applies to the current situation; future potential considerations for an impartial expulsion hearing board will be brought before the Board" be omitted. Dr. Friedrich recalls agreeing to no such thing. He also believes that the motion itself contains no closing date, therefore is not written to address a current situation. Mr. Moore recalled that it was a more generic discussion, but Dr. Friedrich felt that was a hypothetical discussion that did not apply to the motion. He does not feel that there was any general agreement reached, but the motion stands as is. Mr. Hicks disagreed, stating that the motion says "hearing", not "hearings" and applies to the hearing they were discussing that evening. Dr. Friedrich felt that the Board should revisit the motion as it is ambiguous.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion to delete the sentence reading "The decision to appoint an impartial expulsion hearing board applies to the current situation; future potential considerations for an impartial expulsion hearing board will be brought before the Board" be deleted from the minutes, however no one seconded the motion. Mr. Hicks suggested the Board revisit the motion and should be put on a future agenda. Dr. Friedrich then read the original motion at Dr. Taylor's request. Mrs. Boyle asked if there was a recording of the meeting and Dr. Veronesi stated that she had done the minutes and had a couple of Board members read them. Mr. Augur stated that he would support Dr. Friedrich's motion to delete the first part of the sentence.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to delete the partial sentence reading, "The decision to appoint an impartial expulsion hearing board applies to the current situation," and leave the remaining part of the sentence.

In favor of approving the amendment to the minutes: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Mrs. Boyle abstained; two voted in opposition. Motion passed.

In favor of approving minutes as amended: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Next Board Meeting - April 4, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School

2018-2019 Regional School District Budget Discussion

A. Budget Strategy

Dr. Veronesi reminded everyone that there had been a few items remaining from the Board's prior discussion, in particular the music department and Central Office staffing. She also wanted to continue discussion about funding safety and security items while keeping the budget at a 0% budget. They had also talked about salaries and benefits and the undesignated funds that remain. The current-year salary line has been reduced by \$200,000.

There had been a question about whether it was permissible for the Board to approve a transfer of these funds and Dr. Veronesi sought legal guidance who told her that that would be allowed. She also anticipates savings from a reduction in brokerage fees and insurance rates. The Board can also redirect debt service appropriation in the 2018-2019 school year.

B. Safety and Security

The budget strategy is to reduce next year's budget to accommodate some of the safety and security areas that have been suggested. Dr. Veronesi believes that the priority is to upgrade the cameras, monitors and buzzer system and this can be done with funds from the Tech Supply account immediately in this school year. The installation of the 3M window film had been estimated at \$50,000, but after further investigation a more accurate estimation is \$225,000 for all of the schools' windows. Mrs. Neubig reported that the window film ranges from \$12/square foot to \$40/square foot for film to stop a rifle bullet. The estimate does not include the second floor at the high school. Dr. Taylor asked if the film makes the glass unbreakable and also asked how many school shootings actually had glass shot out before entering the building. He believes that this is the type of information necessary to make decisions based on cost-effectiveness. Mrs. Neubig stated that the intent of the film is to keep the glass together and it only slows down entry, essentially to buy time. Dr. Taylor wondered if the film would impede the ability to get outside during a fire. Dr. Augur also suggested mirrored film. Dr. Friedrich wondered how often windows are broken and children are led over the shards of glass to get out of the school.

Dr. Veronesi indicated that the upgrade of the vestibules is a complex, time consuming and expensive project that can't begin quickly. There is a strong potential that the school's offices would have to be restructured to accommodate the "hardened" entryway.

Dr. Veronesi summarized that the safety upgrade recommendations come from people with experience in this field with whom she has consulted. Dr. Friedrich asked where in the price range the estimate falls and Mrs. Neubig explained that it was estimated at \$12-\$13 a square foot which will prevent a bullet from a handgun from shattering the glass. It will slow bullets from a higher power or repeated shots. Mrs. Geraci thought maybe it made sense to put a higher quality film on the entrances and exits as it seems unlikely that a shooter goes through windows.

Dr. Veronesi explained that while they are always paying attention to safety and security, this intense focus during the budget process resulted in them pooling the best expertise that they could. Dr. Veronesi explained that the entryways and all lower level windows would be the best coverage that she can offer and would not feel comfortable suggesting one or the other.

Mrs. Boyle felt that it would give everyone in the building some sense of safety. She thought the entryways should possibly be the stronger film, but the windows need to be done also. Mrs. Boyle would like to see the difference in price between reflective film vs. this other film.

Mr. Augur asked if any of the films affect the light and how they would darken the room. Mr. Yamartino asked about the life expectancy of the film. Mrs. Petrella felt that the entryways are extremely critical, including the cameras, monitor and buzzer system. The SRO is another critical piece. She believes that enhancing the vestibule entries will take more time and she would hold off the window coverings until the other enhancements are done. Mrs. Petrella also commented that this is physical security, but there is also the emotional piece. She questioned if there is enough staffing and support within the schools.

Dr. Veronesi summarized that the Parkland incident has put a different focus on safety and security, with a heightened awareness. She believes that there needs to be a comprehensive strategic plan for safety and security. Dr. Veronesi felt that her responsibility was to bring these preliminary recommendations forward to the Board.

Dr. Veronesi and Mr. Falcone had spoken about the security monitors prior to February 14th and she would recommend that including this position immediately. She would like to see the District begin the process of hiring a School Resource Officer, but felt that that would be unlikely to happen this school year. Dr. Veronesi wants to be sure that the public understands that she does not believe that a School Resource Officer will assure safety in the District and take away all worries. This would just be a piece of it.

Dr. Veronesi felt that the District should reach out for estimates on the enhanced vestibule project, but believes it would not happen quickly or necessarily be in next year's budget. The kiosk system would also be an upgraded way to monitor people entering buildings once there was a vestibule system. Dr. Veronesi sees signage as a very low budget, but important, addition. Mrs. Boyle asked where the numbering for each window is included in the budget and Mrs. Neubig explained that that was not included in the budget. Mr. Yamartino also felt that numbering the windows and enhanced signage was important.

Mrs. Boyle asked about a timeline for moving ahead with the budget. She would not be in support of the enhanced vestibule entry in this budget season, but is for the film, the cameras, monitors and signage. She would also want to add another \$10,000 for alphabetizing the entire District. Mrs. Neubig explained

that the cameras and buzzer system can be done this year with IT Supplies money. Mrs. Boyle was trying to come up with a dollar amount that the Board can decide on tonight.

Dr. Veronesi explained that if there was an agreement that the Board supports transferring money from salaries and/or benefits, some of these items could be funded in this current school year. There is also a surplus in the Supply account because they had frozen that account. Mrs. Neubig felt that the film would last 15+ years.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion that the Board supports transfer of money from salaries and benefits to support the immediate implementation of security items, but there was no second at this time.

Mr. Moore summarized that some funds are available in the current supply budget immediately and other monies are available in salaries and benefits that would have to be transferred to a different line item. The vestibule project, including the kiosks, would probably have to be bonded. Some of the signage could be done now. As for the SRO and the monitor, the Board needs to decide if they want to create that position in next year's budget or start the process now.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the cameras, monitor and buzzer system would be taken care of this year from the current IT Supplies budget.

Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to do the cameras, monitors and buzzer system upgrades for \$30,000 out of this current year's IT Supplies budget.

In favor of approving \$30,000 for cameras, monitors and buzzer system upgrades from the current year's IT Supplies budget: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Pretella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Regarding the window film, Mrs. Neubig was not comfortable with taking too much money from the Supplies account and would like to see it come from the Salaries/Benefits line item. Dr. Friedrich felt that Mrs. Neubig and Dr. Veronesi can decide how much money comes from each line item. Dr. Veronesi felt there were still questions about the film and would like to provide those answers before the Board decides on that. Mr. Roraback suggested that there may be heating or cooling cost reductions associated with either the reflective or shaded film.

Dr. Veronesi suggested that they add another School Security Monitor in the high school until the end of the year for \$6,000. Dr. Taylor asked if the monitors are armed and they are not. Mr. Moore asked if the School Security Monitor is an employee or a contractor and Dr. Veronesi would like to keep the second monitor remain in next year's budget if the Board does not support the SRO. Mrs. Boyle asked what the cost of the School Security Monitor is for next year and Dr. Veronesi explained that that is already in the budget (at CRHS) and if an SRO was approved that position could go to Strong School. Mrs. Boyle would be in favor of maintaining the School Security Monitor and having an SRO.

Mrs. Geraci asked what the difference would be between an armed guard and a security monitor. Dr. Veronesi had not looked at that because she was more interested in the training, expertise and skill that an SRO has. Mrs. Neubig thought that armed guards were about \$30 per hour, but she wasn't sure that the District would be allowed to use armed guards due to the contact with the State Troopers. Mr. Augur felt

that that is an interesting possibility to explore. Mrs. Boyle felt that the SRO would train and communicate with school monitors.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the District had an SRO for many years and the position was eliminated due to state grant funding discontinuing. Anytime police officers are here, the District gets feedback and an SRO would go to the other schools and provide that same feedback. Dr. Taylor stated that the District could hire a consultant to do that, but Dr. Friedrich felt that a person who wanders through for a few days does not have the same input data as someone who is actually in the District. Mr. Augur felt that the time the SRO would spend in other schools takes away from the armed presence at the high school. Discussion continued about the role of the SRO.

Dr. Veronesi stated that every principal she has spoken to about the SRO feels that the number one benefit of having an SRO is that they are a person that a student can speak to about things that they will not speak to another adult about. Dr. Taylor stated that the evidence in the literature doesn't support that and no clear advantage or disadvantage is cited in the studies. Mr. Augur thought that, for the same cost, they may be able to provide an armed presence at each and every school. Mr. Augur brought up the concern of something occurring which may result in a suspension now, but then may become criminal.

Mr. Yamartino asked who has the authority in the schools, the SRO, principal, superintendent or Board of Education. Dr. Veronesi explained that it is not their intention to criminalize behavior. Mr. Augur asked about the comments about writing tickets for vaping and Mr. Falcone explained that it is against the law, but that would not be the first step. All discipline would be Mr. Falcone's responsibility, but he reminded the Board that it is the parents who would press charges. Mr. Falcone reviewed some incidents that he had in his past school where an SRO was present. Their presence makes a significant difference in overall behavior in a school and they will not be utilized to give out tickets.

Mr. Falcone explained that if a student was caught vaping, normal school consequences would first be contacting the parent and having an appropriate suspension. A second offense would prompt the SRO to call the home and inform them of the law. It is never the school's intention to give the student a criminal record. Mr. Falcone did state that he was never in a situation where an SRO had to break up a fight and Dr. Friedrich asked if the SRO would have an obligation under the law to make an arrest in that case. Mr. Falcone did not believe the arrest would be for assault unless charges were pressed, though it could be breach of peace.

Mr. Moore summarized the four issues at hand: does the Board want to make a recommendation for the 2018-2019 budget to fund an SRO, begin the process of hiring an SRO for this year, hire another school monitor by contract during the current year, and add another monitor for next year.

Mrs. Boyle asked if a representative from the State Police could attend the next Board meeting to educate them on the role and responsibilities of an SRO and Dr. Veronesi felt that was possible. Dr. Friedrich liked the idea, but felt that they needed to decide about the money. He is in favor of having the money for an SRO in the budget for next year.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to include a School Resource Officer at the maximum rate in the 2018-2019 budget.

Mr. Roraback reported that his research has shown that the District does not have a hand in the hiring process and that the commanding officer decides who gets assigned where. Dr. Veronesi explained that the District does make the decision to hire an SRO, but would not have if they were sharing the Trooper with Durham. Dr. Veronesi also stated that the District can fire the SRO as well.

Mr. Augur would have preferred the motion to be for some sort of armed presence, not necessarily an SRO. Mrs. Boyle stated that she would not feel comfortable with hired armed guards without some sense of direction and organization and would be okay with having armed guards in addition to an SRO. Dr. Taylor would also not feel comfortable with armed guards without an SRO. He felt it was the Board's responsibility to provide safety and security for all students throughout the District and it should be all or none, with an armed presence at each school. He would be in support of armed guards at each school with an SRO overseeing them or not pursuing it at all. Mrs. Geraci agreed with Dr. Taylor and felt it was all or nothing.

Dr. Veronesi wanted to confirm with Dr. Taylor that he has questions about the research-based impact of the SRO but would be in support of an SRO in the budget if the other schools had some type of armed presence. Dr. Taylor felt that would complete the Board's duty to serve all students within the District. He would be more in favor, from a cost effectiveness standpoint, of just putting armed guards in each school but does agree with the need for organization. Mr. Augur explained that the SRO would be responsible for all the armed staff in the District and would be able to truly devote time to all of the buildings. Mr. Augur felt that that would be a district-wide decision that he would be more comfortable with.

Mr. Augur made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to amend Dr. Friedrich's motion to be a School Resource Officer for the District, designated to manage an armed presence at each building and remove the Security Monitor position.

Mr. Yamartino mentioned that the original motion spoke to fully funding this item in the budget and asked if the Board was going to contemplate offsets for this. Mrs. Neubig explained that the Salary line item is \$200,000 less than this year. Mr. Augur clarified that his motion was for an SRO and five armed guards. Mrs. Neubig gave a quick estimate for each armed guard at \$35/hour which equates to about \$60,000 per guard, multiplied by five would be approximately \$300,000. She also reminded the Board that if these employees work 30 hours a week or more, they will be offered health insurance benefits unless the District goes with a security firm which would then probably mean a higher rate. Mrs. Boyle suggested that the research be done on this before a vote is taken and Mr. Moore reminded everyone that there is not much time.

Dr. Veronesi suggested designating an amount or a range, with either an increase in the total budget or a reallocation that will give time to develop the model. The Board generally agreed to meet again to discuss these issues on Wednesday. Mr. Moore reviewed that there are two motions on the floor, but no exact cost is available. Dr. Friedrich offered to table his motion until the next meeting, but Mr. Hicks recommended that both motions be withdrawn. Mr. Augur agreed that more information is needed, but was willing to show the public that the Board is committed to this issue.

Dr. Veronesi mentioned that if the Board was to designate a certain amount of money towards armed presence and it turns out to be less, there are some other areas where that money could be directed to enhance safety and security. Dr. Friedrich felt that the Board should vote on the amendment to his motion

and then he will withdraw or table his motion. Mr. Yamartino summarized that this equates to a pretty significant dollar amount and they will need to look for opportunities to offset the cost. Dr. Friedrich asked the Board to vote on the amendment.

In favor of amending the original motion: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

Dr. Friedrich then requested that his original motion with the amendment be tabled until the next meeting when dollar values are available. Dr. Veronesi will get the information a meeting on Wednesday, March 28th.

Mr. Yamartino then went on to review the next issue is an SRO for the remainder of the current school year or to just start the hiring process. Mrs. Boyle felt that it would take time to hire an SRO with the full training. Dr. Veronesi has been in touch with Sgt. Burns and if we wanted to have a special duty officer in the high school, we could get that next week but it may not be the same person from now until the end of the year. That cost would be at a daily rate, dependent on years of service of the officer.

Mr. Moore asked if the Board wanted to use current unexpended funds to hire someone now while we pursue the SRO. Dr. Veronesi would be able to get a quote on that expense for Wednesday's meeting as well. Mrs. Neubig explained that it could be approximately \$200 per hour, depending on the years of service. There would be enough money in the current budget to hire another hall monitor for the high school and would not require any transfer of funds.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to hire an additional security monitor for the high school for the remainder of this school year at the estimated cost of \$6,000.

Mr. Augur asked for a description of the responsibilities of the school security monitor and Dr. Veronesi stated that she relies on him about questions of residency which includes investigating residency. Mr. Falcone reviewed that he begins his morning in the parking lot and walks the outside of the building twice during the day. He also walks the halls in between each periods two times a day, stops in the bathrooms two times each period and then is also in the cafeteria during each lunch wave. He also locks and unlocks the bathrooms after the cafeteria use so there are only two open throughout the day. Mr. Falcone stated that the concern would be in the female bathrooms and monitoring those. There have also been adjustments in study halls and teacher coverage, so the extra set of eyes would help with that. Mr. Augur then asked if the request is for a female monitor and Dr. Veronesi confirmed that Mr. Falcone has asked for a female monitor, but she wasn't sure that would happen.

Mr. Yamartino asked if the students would feel safer with this other person here and felt that this is really not in response to security issues. Mr. Falcone stated that this was requested prior to the latest security issues and this would be primarily for safety reasons. Mrs. Petrella worked in a school with a security monitor and she felt that his presence was well-known and he was well-liked. They did not have an SRO, but the DARE officers visited once a week and the students loved them.

In favor of hiring an additional security monitor for the high school for the remainder of this school year at the estimated cost of \$6,000: Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Yamartino. In opposition: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.

Mr. Moore reviewed that the remaining issue was the use of any current-year funds to hire an SRO for the remainder of the year. Dr. Friedrich felt that if the person who would be our SRO for next year became available, it would be wise to hire them now. Mr. Moore explained that that could be voted on when it occurs.

Mr. Yamartino wanted to clarify his comments at the last meeting and explained the process for transferring funds in a municipality have to follow certain procedures under state statute, including town meetings. He applauded the administration for generating a surplus, but he didn't feel that it was ethical to discuss transferring that surplus with a simple vote by the Board of Education, even though it is legal to do. Mr. Yamartino also pointed out that it is only 40 days until the budget goes to referendum and that could be added as a referendum line item. Mr. Hicks understood his objection, but did not see it that way. Mrs. Petrella understood and felt it could be dangerous for a Board to transfer money on a whim. She also felt these were extenuating circumstances and the Board is very conscious of that.

It was generally agreed to bring this issue back to the Board when, and if, the opportunity arises to hire the SRO in this school year.

Mr. Moore reviewed the signage issue and Mrs. Neubig had stated that that could be handled under this year's supplies line item.

Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hicks, to authorize the expenditure of \$20,000 on signage from the current supply account.

In favor of authorizing the expenditure of \$20,000 on signage from the current supply account: Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

Mrs. Boyle asked for further information about alphabetizing and numbering of the windows for the next meeting.

D. Staffing

Dr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to reinstate the 0.5 FTE in the Music Department.

Mr. Yamartino commented that they have already reduced the budget by \$200,000 on the salary line item and asked if that salary line item can be maintained with this reinstatement at \$21,116,888. Mrs. Neubig agreed. Mr. Moore stated that the intent would be to not raise the 0 percent budget with this item.

Mr. Hicks stated that he is loath to vote in favor of this because he has a great deal of trust in the administration who have stated that this would not have a huge impact on the music program. He is aware that the Board has received countless letters and applauds the people who wrote them for their passion, but feels they need to rely on the judgment of the administration. He is aware that there is an interest group that brought this together, but nothing else is being reinstated, including art. Mr. Augur echoed Mr. Hicks' comments and also feels that the administration does not enter these decisions lightly. Mrs. Petrella also agreed with Mr. Hicks and feels that Dr. Veronesi would not propose a cut that she didn't feel was necessary. Dr. Friedrich is personally extremely in favor of music, but as the enrollment declines, the per pupil expenditure goes up unless the District reduces in other categories. The school

system will be losing 40 percent of its students and cannot be expected to maintain all of the non-academic activities at the same levels. He, too, trusts Dr. Veronesi that this will not gut the music program, but also pointed out that the towns face a loss of close to \$4 million of income from the state in the next 10 years.

Dr. Taylor stated that he feels like the Board has failed by not establishing priorities at the beginning of the budget process. There was no clear articulation of what the Board prioritizes, whether it be STEAM or music or whatnot. Dr. Taylor felt that music should be a priority and this cut should be reinstated. He also clarified that the proposed cut is not in an area with declining enrollment and is not at the high school.

Mrs. Boyle does believe in Dr. Veronesi's and the administration's judgment and echoed Mr. Hicks' comments as well. She believes that the Board and the community sent a directive to Dr. Veronesi to bring in a low budget and that is what she has done. Mrs. Boyle does feel that a Board member's job is to listen to their constituents and she heard the comments about the music department loud and clear and would be fine putting that item back into the budget.

Mr. Moore also thanked Dr. Veronesi for trying to make reductions that could be done without great impact on the programming. He too feels that the community has repeatedly asked for this position to be reinstated and would support Dr. Taylor's motion.

In favor of reinstating the 0.5 FTE in the Music Department: Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. In opposition: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback. Motion failed.

2018-2019 Regional School District 13 Budget

Mr. Moore summarized that the Board is not ready at this point to finalize the budget and that will be delayed until at least the next meeting. The next meeting will be set for Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

The Board took a brief break at this point.

Superintendent's Report: Strategic Visioning Update

Dr. Veronesi explained that the District's intent in holding Strategic Visioning meetings in the afternoon was to be able to have as many teachers as possible around the table. There is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow and it is open to parents. During that meeting, they will discuss scheduling another meeting in the evening to make it easier for parents to attend.

Dr. Veronesi had a mock-up of what the flyer would look like and explained that it will be about \$1,300 for them to be printed and mailed to everyone in the two communities. It will be online as well.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the Utilization Committee has talked about three options, one of which would be to maintain the status quo. They are trying to get Strategic Visioning to align with that. Dr. Veronesi is reluctant to make statements about this in order to hear people's voices from the community and explained that this is where we are in the process. As they talked about the mission of the Utilization Committee, part of that includes "while meeting programmatic needs as determined by the

administration.” The administration is working with parents and the community on this determination. They need to keep the curriculum in mind as well as common core standards and if it make sense to separate grades as well as instructional design. Additionally, they are listening to the voices of the community and have had some priority themes surface which include connection, choice, voice, innovation, creativity and collaboration. Those themes were seen very clearly when they talked about the space, how and where children and adults work within the District’s buildings.

Design elements have surfaced regarding programming, including multi-age classrooms, project-based and self-directed learning, school-wide assemblies, HOT school framework, arts integration, use of democratic practices and space configured to support identified themes.

Looking at the options, Dr. Veronesi reported that a one-approach model could be used in all of the schools (K-8) in Option A that includes the identified design elements. She feels that much of what has been identified is characteristic of the programming that exists at Lyman School, but she felt that multi-grade, single-grade and/or looping options could be sustained in one building. There is also the possibility that a HOT school model would be possible in Brewster, Memorial and Strong, however there is an application and acceptance process.

Student leadership is more developed at Lyman School than Brewster, but it is very important for all students and that would be more well-developed and more identifiable in Brewster, Memorial and Strong as well as the high school. She does believe that the Strategic Visioning plan will help the District, regardless of the option selected.

Dr. Veronesi explained that a belief system is emerging about what “good education” looks like in District 13 that is outside the realm of a building configuration. This means that whatever the program is, it should be in all schools. Dr. Veronesi stated that she couldn’t tell the Board what the Strong School 5-7 middle school model would look like right now and that would need to be a much more focused discussion though CCSS are organized to a 3-5, 6-8 model. Looking at that model, there would definitely need to be an eighth grade teaming or academy model developed if they were to move to the high school. There is no designated wing at the high school, so they would, in fact, have to be integrated into the current high school schedule and physical layout though there may be some variations.

Again, Dr. Veronesi has tried to stay away from any judgmental or pejorative sharing of information. She is aware of many strong negative feelings about eighth graders at the high school. That would be something that they will work on over the next year with grade-based planning teams.

Talking about the “status quo”, they have realized that they can’t keep doing what they’ve been doing. This visioning process has added vitality and a more dynamic approach to what’s currently in place. Part of tomorrow’s meeting will be to begin to cross-reference the themes and design elements with Option A, Option B and Option C to identify pros and cons.

Mr. Augur asked if Strategic Visioning would transform from teacher-only to a different process if the Board were to decide on an option and Dr. Veronesi felt that it would somewhat. Dr. Veronesi reviewed that she had deliberately structured this committee to not immediately on buildings/programs. She also commented that the community has a tremendous fear of loss for something that is beloved which can make people afraid of thinking about any kind of visioning that might look different in the future.

Mr. Augur noted that there has also been feedback about the detriment to eighth grade students in a fully-integrated high school. Mr. Augur felt that Option A is the clear choice, based on feedback received and the Strategic Visioning process. He also explained that Utilization has talked about a process, but it is ultimately the full Board's decision. He felt it was time for the Board to vote to adopt Option A so the Strategic Visioning process can move forward in a firm direction.

Mr. Augur made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, that the full Board vote to adopt Option A as the direction that we seek, with the full time for planning to implement at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

Mrs. Boyle stated that she likes Option A, but she feels like she's only had eight minutes to look at it. Mr. Augur agreed, but his point would be to give Strategic Visioning two years and three months to develop the plan. Before seeing Dr. Veronesi's presentation tonight with the priorities, Mr. Yamartino would not have been in favor of voting for anything without seeing a framework. He had been concerned about only half the students being in a HOT school and he felt reassured that the District would move to have that throughout.

Dr. Veronesi mentioned that some Lyman teachers have stated that they weren't sure that a preK-2 school could be a HOT school in the way it is intended. Cori-Ann DiMaggio has already started making phone calls to gather information about that. Dr. Veronesi explained that Lyman School has practices and programs that are unlike what Brewster is doing. Brewster has some practices that are different from Lyman, but not in the same way to uniquely identify it as a programmatic difference. Envisioning the future, many of the design elements that have been identified as desirable are present through ID.

Mrs. Boyle asked if parents from Brewster have provided any feedback and Dr. Veronesi would characterize their feedback as just wanting to do what's best for the students and also noting that they sometimes feel a sense of elitism that can be perceived from Lyman School supporters and that the message is that students there are actually receiving a better education and a better experience. She does not believe that is the intent of the Lyman parents, but Brewster parents do sometimes come away with that feeling.

Mr. Yamartino agreed that he has heard comments that there is an "us and them" in the District. The students and parents do not interact with others in the same grade and that could hurt the communities in terms of not building a common culture. He also believes that Option B may set the District up for those same feelings to some extent.

Dr. Veronesi also reported that they have received requests from parents at Memorial and Strong asking for a change in program and this coming together may help with that. She also mentioned the priority of sustainability of a high-level program with diminishing resources.

Mrs. Petrella stated that she too has favored Option A, but asked how the preK-2, 3-4 program looks compared to the current K-4 configuration as a HOT school. Dr. Veronesi felt that that would be the next planning that needs to happen. Dr. Veronesi also explained that not all teachers agree with this and some will not be happy.

Mrs. Geraci felt that the unknown is what makes parents nervous and she believes it would be incredibly valuable to give the most amount of time possible to move forward. Dr. Veronesi also commented on the

passion that parents have to share their voice on this and the Board could garner some criticism doing this without giving them that chance. Mr. Augur felt that that would be leading parents on and they have certainly received communication representative of all vantage points. Mrs. Boyle stated that she is sensitive to the fact that it is a paradigm change and she doesn't want anyone to think the Board is making decisions too quickly.

Dr. Veronesi also commented that she has not gotten input to create two different programs and she also does not hear that from the students. The high school students, by and large, are not saying to keep a design that makes people choose and creates competition.

Dr. Taylor reminded the Board that they had said they were going to send out a survey and engage the public at a meeting. He believes that the decision needs to be made soon, but doesn't believe that delaying it one to two weeks to get additional input and engaging the public is wrong. Dr. Taylor worries that the Board will get a lot of negative feedback from this.

Mr. Augur did explain that those commitments were actually Utilization Committee recommendations, not the full Board. Mr. Moore stated that the Board did indicate that they would get this information and survey out. His concern would be the same as Dr. Taylor's and he still believes it would be valuable to go through that process. Dr. Friedrich agreed and would favor the Utilization Committee recommending Option A to the Board as quickly as possible, but would like to leave time for the community to feel engaged after being fully informed. Dr. Friedrich then moved the question.

Dr. Friedrich then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hicks, to move the question and stop discussion.

In favor of moving the question: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

In favor of approving Option A to give Dr. Veronesi and her staff the maximum time to continue to flush out the Strategic Visioning process: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. In opposition: Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.

Mrs. Boyle asked if it is too late to edit the mailer and Mr. Augur suggested sending out information as to where the District is headed. Dr. Veronesi felt it was very important to remember this information was an update. Mrs. Boyle felt that this just got shoved down the taxpayers' throats. Mr. Augur asked if there should possibly be an ad hoc committee to continue with the strategic visioning.

Mr. Roraback asked that the fact that full integration of Middlefield and Durham students, from kindergarten on, be included in any information as it is extraordinarily valuable. Mrs. Petrella also felt that resources can really be concentrated without having to be split between two different schools. Mrs. Boyle asked how the Board could re-vote this issue and Mr. Hicks felt that she could ask for a re-vote, but that would require a two-thirds majority to ask for that and she would have to be on the prevailing side to make that motion. That would have to come from somebody who voted in favor of the motion.

Dr. Veronesi felt that the Board just lit a fire even though the intent was to allow the process to continue to move forward. She feels that there are probably people who feel strongly in favor of a K-4 and

maintaining Lyman School in its true essence and wanted to have a voice in that. She also believes there are people that might actually support a two K-4 model, but not with eighth grade at the high school.

Mr. Yamartino gathered that the sense is that the vote was premature and they had said they would do the survey and receive feedback, but he felt like they had heard the feedback. Mr. Yamartino had voted in favor of the motion, but then asked for a re-vote on the motion. Mr. Hicks felt that the second also needed to be someone who voted in favor, but wasn't completely sure. He will provide an answer on that at the next meeting.

Mr. Yamartino then made a motion to reconsider, but there was no second and therefore no motion.

Committee Reports

A. Human Resources Committee - March 20, 2018

Mrs. Boyle felt that she couldn't speak at the moment and Mr. Yamartino asked that the committee reports be moved to the next meeting.

B. Continued Discussion on Utilization flyer/survey

This will also be moved to the next meeting.

Communications

Mr. Moore reported that he has received letters from Elizabeth DeRenti, Maya Liss, Katie Kadejian, David Ullman, Stephen Liss, about the SRO and Lyman School; Nick Faiella about the participation fee; Rebecca Holicho about no eighth grade, Margaret Smith about eighth grade, Missy Booth supporting the ID and keeping K-4, Elizabeth Shoudy about the SRO, Jenn Zettergren corrected a statement in the February minutes, Michelle DiMauro about utilization, Theresa Weimann about Lyman, Steven Wolk about Lyman, Jim Irish about the budget, Jenna Driscoll about school choice, Jennifer DeAngelis about music, Tracy Wickwire about the last day of school, Hayden Hurlbert about SRO, Katherine Anecchino about graduation date, Nina Healey about music and strategic visioning, Tina McGoldrick about strategic visioning, Maya Liss about strategic visioning, Christina Dreyfus-Bates on strategic visioning, Kate Front on strategic visioning and Oanh Stephan on strategic visioning.

Mr. Moore also reported that the Cuginchaug girls won the State Championship in basketball. They also received a thank-you from the Cuginchaug Valley Education Fund for attending the trivia bee.

Dr. Friedrich reported that Tracy Wickwire wrote, "Why on earth are we pushing our 182-day school year farther and farther back because of the snow days when the state only requires 180."

Mr. Hicks thanked Dr. Veronesi for going to the ACES Education Foundation gala last Thursday night. He also reported that he read at Brewster School a few weeks back and received a bound book of thank-you notes that were illustrated and written by the students. He thanked Mrs. Poach and her class for their kindness.

Mr. Yamartino then reported that he had looked up Robert's Rules and a motion to reconsider can be brought up at an appropriate time by any member voting on the prevailing side and does not need to be seconded. It does have to occur on the same day as the original motion. It was agreed to move with the agenda while members looked for further information.

Business Manager's Report

Mrs. Neubig had nothing out of ordinary to report and invited the Board members to email her with any questions. Mrs. Boyle asked how the recent snow storm impacted the budget and Mrs. Neubig reported that they have not received the invoices for it yet, but felt it would probably push it over another \$15,000.

New Business

A. 2017-2018 Calendar

Dr. Veronesi explained that the Board cannot vote on graduation day prior to April 1st, by state statute. So far, the District has had eight snow days which would put the last day of school (and generally graduation day) on Monday, June 25th. She would like the Board to consider having the last day of school for all students be on the 181st day or Friday, June 22, 2018 and use Monday, June 25th as a work day for teachers. This may help to avoid some curriculum-writing costs that would have been incurred later in that week in June.

Committee Reports

A. Human Resources Committee - March 20, 2018

Mrs. Boyle was now able to report that Dr. Veronesi presented the organizational chart for the Central Office staff and they had a lengthy discussion about it. They have also asked Dr. Veronesi to do an organizational chart for each individual building. The HR Committee does understand every position and there does not look to be any way to reduce Central Office staff at this time.

Dr. Taylor and Mr. Hicks both stated that they found that a second is required on the motion to reconsider and has to be on the prevailing side. Mr. Yamartino also explained that they are not allowed to reconsider a motion to reconsider.

Public Comment

Janina Eddinger, from Middlefield, thanked the Utilization Committee for all their time and effort. She did mention that she had taken some ninth grade classes while in eighth grade and was excited and energized to hear about the possibility of eighth grade moving to the high school as it would help out accelerated students. Mrs. Eddinger also likened the current ID program to a working body and felt that removing the 3/4 graders from the school would be like removing a vital organ from a working body. She would like to see a unified district and likes the idea of a unified program throughout all grades, but cannot stand behind a program that would remove a vital organ from a perfectly healthy body. She would like to see K-4 or K-5 included in the model to develop strong leaders. Mrs. Eddinger hopes that the Board will seriously consider what the impact will be on the District if they could find a way for Option B to work.

David Booth, from Durham, is sad to say that he lives in Durham now. He felt that this came too quickly and the Board did not follow through with what they said they would do. He does love Lyman for the arts and music the District has to offer. He does not believe the music program will be the same without reinstating the .5 FTE. Mr. Booth feels that the Board should have gone through the motions to allow the community to feel they have input. Every year, he feels like it's chipping away at what it was when he moved here 13 years ago with a lot less arts. The District talks about STEAM and this other crap, but he sees more professionals coming back as writers and artists than athletes. He believes that the focus should be on anything college-wise rather than athletics and the only things that got raises this year were coaches.

Chris Davis, from Durham, was speaking as a grandparent and was feeling such a terrible loss. The ID program is 47 years old and people come from all over the country to see how it's done. She is overwhelmed that the Board would cut it in half and looked at it for only eight minutes and made a decision. She is overwhelmed that the Board said that they would do a survey and gather input, but then not do it. Mrs. Davis explained that you need 80 percent buy-in from the staff to have a HOT school. If you take half of Lyman and put it at Brewster or Memorial, you would no longer have that and the HOT school is gone. Kids work slowly up to the Senate in second grade with a lot of modeling from older students and mentors. She felt that 60 percent of parents choose Brewster because they like the program. Mrs. Davis feels that this was a very bad decision and that the District will regret it at budget time for the next five years. She cannot go home and tell her daughter that her son will not be in an ID classroom and that he will not have the full benefits that she had and loved because of an eight-minute slide.

Teresa Opalacz, from Durham, begged the Board to speak to other districts and other schools about putting armed guards in every school because we will never be able to turn back. She agreed that safety is a concern, but also realizes that there are a lot of psychological issues involved with a school shooting. She thought that possibly more money could be put into the buildings to make them safer than putting an individual in the building.

Adjournment

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to adjourn the special meeting of the Board of Education.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 10:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First