

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, April 4, 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. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Board members absent: Mr. Hicks.

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Geraci made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to move the Administrator Welcome and Recognition of the CRHS Girls' Basketball team to item 3.

In favor of approving the amendment to the agenda: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to approve the agenda, as amended.

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

Administrator Welcome - Brian Falcone and the CRHS Reporters - Colleen Coogan, Demarie Del Vecchio and Daniel Turecek

Mr. Falcone reported that the past month and a half has been a very challenging time for the Coginchaug community and it became easy to overlook some of the achievements over the past two months.

The Coginchaug community attended a ceremony in memory of the students and faculty of Parkland High School. Over 200 students participated and the Chamber Choir performed, students read poems and everyone was silent during the ceremony. That same week, DECA hosted the fifth annual Mr. Coginchaug competition and Cal Pitruzzello was crowned the winner.

Danny Turecek reported that the ECO club had their Hunger Awareness banquet last week and raised over \$500 which was donated to several families in town and several organizations across the nation. He also reported that the play, Back to the 80s, debuts tomorrow night at 7:00, with performances on Friday and Saturday night.

Ms. Schilling explained that she is the director of Back to the 80s and there are about 42 students in the cast with another 15 in the stage crew and 15 in the pit. Mr. Fisher explained that the show is all music from the 80s and the group then performed a song from the play.

The Unified Sports team was recognized by the CIAC as runners-up for the Michaels Cup award. The team has participated in over 20 sporting events this year. She read a quote from a participant who hopes

to become a special education teacher. She also reported that the Girls' Basketball team won the State championship with a core of 71-42 against SMSA on March 17th.

Recognition of the CRHS Girls' Basketball Team

Athletic Director Kory Kevorkian thanked the Board for recognizing the program and stated that one of his goals is to make sure that the kids have a meaningful experience and this year's girls' basketball season was tremendous. Coach Chris Watson thanked the Board for inviting them here to celebrate their accomplishment. He reviewed that they had to deal with injuries to key players, but everyone did whatever they could to make sure nothing kept them from their goals. They finished in second place in the Shoreline (losing in overtime to Cromwell) with a 14-6 record and the ninth seed in the Class S tournament. The team rolled through the first three rounds of the tournament. The semifinal against Weaver was challenging, but they scored 31 points in the fourth quarter to win the game. The state championship was a fantastic experience and the girls played phenomenal basketball. He thanked everyone for their support all season.

The members of the girls' basketball team then introduced themselves to the Board and a group picture was taken. A short recess was taken to greet the girls.

Public Comment

Maygan Morello, from Durham, has two children in the District and subs as well. She had just switched her second grader from Lyman to Brewster as it wasn't the best fit for him. She was happy to have the choice to make the change. Mrs. Morello is looking forward to seeing the information about keeping the two programs, preferably without putting eighth grade into the high school, vs. one new program. She acknowledged that both schools and staff are incredible and stressed that this is not a Lyman vs. Brewster issue. She feels that making blanket statements about one school or another is not constructive and we should all be working together.

Sam Eddinger commented on how passionate the crowd is and thanked the Board of Ed for taking the time to hear the thoughts and concerns of the community. The big issue for him is one of utilization. He feels it is very clear that the enrollment is declining, but the issue is being the best stewards of the schools and utilizing everything to the best of their ability. People have stressed their ideas of not having eighth graders in the high school as well as having elementary schools that have choice. Mr. Eddinger might be concerned that his students would have to be on a bus for extended durations if they went to Brewster as they live in the far end of Middlefield. He urged the Board to make the best decision for the towns, not necessarily for individual concerns. Mr. Eddinger felt that there are other options available beyond what was presented. He felt that the high school could continue without an eighth grade and the elementary schools could support two programs. From talking to some Board members, he believes that Memorial and Strong both have the capability to handle three grades. If it was K-5, half Durham, half Middlefield, that would effectively be three grades and 8, 7, 6 would be three grades. He would ask the Board to look into whether this configuration would be possible, with a build-out at Brewster.

Maddie Ventola, a third grader at John Lyman, loves her school. She thinks that closing John Lyman is not a great idea because they have ECHOs that are a great learning experience. She also pointed out the core ethical values. They also have all the different boards at John Lyman and they are part of what makes Lyman the school it is. She stated that John Lyman also values the democratic practice and the students make their own choices. She asked the Board to please not close John Lyman.

Cindy Saraceno, from Middlefield, presented a study from the Journal of Educational Leadership dated March 21, 2018. The study provides new empirical evidence that increased student-teacher familiarity improves academic achievement in elementary school. They observed small, but significant, test scores gains for students assigned the same teacher in a higher grade, or looping like John Lyman does. Repeat teachers is a relatively low cost policy that should be given due consideration. The paper focused on North Carolina students in grades 3-5 who had the same teacher two years in a row. This occurred not with looping, but with a small share of students ending up with the same teacher twice. She quoted several teachers and their thoughts on looping.

Addison Nappi, a student at John Lyman School, stated that she did not want her school to close because she has a lot of memories there. She wants to be sure all the kindergartners learn the songs and specials, like music, art, library and PE. She really loves John Lyman School.

Kylie, a second grader at John Lyman, is concerned about her education and needs adults to help her. She read a story about how it takes a village. Kindness and caring and sharing matter. Playing matters and so does resting, because the world is in a hurry but children are not. She asked the Board to support her village and keep John Lyman alive.

Julia Reynolds, a student at John Lyman School, said she would not like John Lyman to close because they have so many opportunities that other schools do not have.

Steve Reynolds is a parent of a daughter at John Lyman and a son who is home-schooled and attends an independent learning program which brings him to the point of choice. He believes that the choice in the District is very important. The program at John Lyman has been very beneficial, evident from his daughter walking up to the mic totally unprepared. Lyman has helped her with self-directed learning, confidence building and presentation.

A second grader at John Lyman School stated that her school has really helped her a lot to learn many things. She would not like John Lyman School closed because reading is her favorite thing there. She asked the Board to please not close her school.

Lisa Burt, from Durham, read a letter from her 22-year-old daughter who is a senior at Bentley University. The letter expressed her concern for the potential ending of the ID program. She was a student in the ID program from kindergarten through Strong School. She acknowledged that lack of funding and realizes that John Lyman may need to be closed, but she does not think the budgetary change or decline in enrollment should dictate the closing of such a successful and integral system that helped build future leaders in society. She is concerned that ending the program would be a great disservice to the youth of the community. She cited how important collaboration was, both in the ID program and today, as well as mentors and mentees. She feels that it would be a further disservice to lose a HOT school.

Jill Root, from Middlefield, has three grown children who went through the contemporary program and she had been president of the PTA for many years. Her children did very well in that program and have been successful through college. Her fourth child was very clearly not a Brewster kid and went to John Lyman. She is very successful in the Lyman program. Mrs. Root felt it is an unbelievable opportunity to have that choice and she would hate to see that taken away. She feels that both programs do really wonderful things, but the choice should be available.

Heidi Johnson, from Durham, stated that she has a third grader at Brewster and a fourth grader at Memorial. She is in support of Option A and feels that it best meets the needs of all the District's students, makes the best use of the existing resources and allows for a responsible budget. She also believes that expeditious adoption of Option A allows the most time for study and to address community concerns about configurations of grades. She is not in favor of eighth grade in the high school.

Susan Oakley, from Durham, thanked the Board for all their work. She has two kids in the Lyman program, but she loves the fact that there is a choice. She is concerned about the number of transitions included in Option A, particularly at the elementary level. She was hopeful that the program would be expanded at Brewster to K-5 when Korn was closed. Mrs. Oakley is hopeful that cost information will be shared. Over a month ago, she had also emailed her concerns about the budget but has never heard back from anyone. She would just like to get some clarification. She also mentioned that her kids were surprised about all of this happening because they didn't even know anything about it. She would like to be able to tell her kids why.

Ryan Walsh, from Middlefield, has a son that goes to Lyman and they are thrilled with the education he is getting in the District. He felt that last week's meeting was very emotional and he wanted to let a week go by before speaking to the Board. He is having a hard time trusting the Board, but he recognizes that hard decisions have to be made. He requested that the Board do their best to try to be transparent with all of the options, assumptions and basis of the estimates. He urged them to be open, honest and transparent so that everyone can make the best decision moving forward.

Kathy DeBrum, from Middlefield, explained that she and Lisa Onofrio are co-chairs of Project Graduation and have been planning for months now. They have raised over \$12,000 in four months. They have chosen the Sports Center of Connecticut in Sheldon as the venue and now they just need a scheduled date for graduation. If the Board chooses Friday, June 22nd as the graduation date, the Sports Center will not be able to accommodate Project Graduation. She asked that the 2018 graduation date be held on Thursday, June 21st, which will allow them to lock in the date with the Sports Center and ensure the graduates enjoy an organized, adult-supervised and alcohol- and drug-free activity.

Theresa Weimann, from Durham, has two children at John Lyman. Last week, her main goal was to explain what John Lyman and Integrated Day program have given her children in two years. She related how well her daughter has done at Lyman. She now meets all second grade levels. She believes that this would not have happened in a traditional program. Over the past week, she has stumbled upon General Statutes of the State of Connecticut and the visions of the State Board of Education. She is disappointed at how the Board of Ed has proceeded with the beginning stages of the redistricting plan that is necessary due to declining enrollment and cuts in state funding. She promised that she will not back down and she wanted the Board to know that she believes that the way they have gone about their decision-making doesn't adhere with the state and federal guidelines for the responsibilities of a public school district. She will do her best to get her information to every integrated day parent and community member. She cited the statutes which apply to these issues and will submit them to the Board.

Tina McGoldrick, from Durham, echoed all that was said supporting the choice between two programs. They chose Lyman and she is not in support of Option A simply because she doesn't see how the integrated day and HOT school programming can exist under that choice. She requested that the Board keep a K-4 or K-5 configuration, keep peer mentoring, keep democratic practice, keep art and literary boards, keep resident artists and keep assemblies.

Nicole Ercolani, from Durham, explained that they moved to Durham about six months ago because of the school system, among other things. One of the top things on the brochure from their real estate agent was the choice. They chose John Lyman based on their interactions with the faculty and the principal, the methods and the HOT school. She felt that if the towns want to continue to attract young, thriving families who care about their children and their education, she doesn't feel that closing down the school that they love is doing to do that. Her daughter has had an amazing experience at John Lyman, especially with the second-grade mentors. Mrs. Ercolani asked the Board to take choice into consideration and that they want the community to continue to grow.

Charles Sass, from Middlefield, graduated from Coginchaug in 1996 and is a lifelong resident. He feels that the animosity between the two programs has been there since he was in school. He feels that John Lyman has a great program and he has a lot of friends that went through that program. The bottom line is that the State of Connecticut is going to eliminate all town funding. The state is going to put all the teachers' pensions on the taxpayers. He felt that the District has to be proactive and do something to keep the taxes in check. If that is not done, most will have to leave. He didn't think it was fair that someone who bought a house and expected to retire here would have to be forced out because of taxes. Mr. Sass requested the Board look at all the options. He would love to keep both programs and he would love to keep his house too.

Mike Gillon, from Durham, reiterated that he has three children and they love the program, John Lyman School and the staff. He reminded the Board about the liability with the vote that was taken. Because of that improper vote that took place at a public meeting on an item not on the agenda, the Board opened themselves up for liability. As a professional in that industry, he hopes that the Board takes that into consideration and addresses it tonight. He hopes that the Board spoke with their attorney. He admitted that he had parents come up to him after the last meeting and they are looking into this issue.

Rick Lanning has two children in Brewster and one that graduated from Brewster. He knows lots of kids and parents from John Lyman and feels that it is a great school. He is in support of Option A because of the funding issue. They do not believe eighth graders should be in high school. He also commented that his child that graduated from Brewster had some educational issues and Brewster did an excellent job.

Kristen Prout, from Durham, appreciated the option to live stream the meetings last week. It seemed that a lot of the public felt that, by closing Lyman, the Board was getting rid of the ID program. She did not get that message when she listened to the meetings and she felt it was important that the Board communicate what the plan actually is. She also noted that the Brewster community feels that they need to speak out on behalf of saving their school because Lyman is speaking out on saving their school. Mrs. Prout is not in favor of looping or multi-aged classrooms though she does respect the Lyman program, but the Brewster families also want to communicate that Brewster has the same positive attributes. She also noted that more people have chosen the contemporary program than the ID program and felt that having two programs would be ideal.

Carl Stoup felt that Lyman is not the topic when you look at the whole system. He thanked the Board of Education and Dr. Veronesi for their forward-looking plan. He realizes that change is not always welcome and the District can have more. He encouraged to Board to stick with their decisions.

Mark Harvey, from Durham, felt that, considering the amount of passion from both sides, that the Board of Ed should practice a bit of humility and accept that maybe both Options A and B are not acceptable

and look for another option that satisfies the community. He would not like eighth graders in the high school, but would like to satisfy the needs of the Lyman parents as well as the fiscal needs of the District.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the live stream video cannot be kept up after the meeting is over unless there are subtitles, due to ADA compliance. They are also trying to get the minutes turned around as quickly as possible.

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education regular session meeting - February 28, 2018

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of February 28, 2018, as presented.

Mrs. Geraci noted that the motion to hire Scott Rossignol as the new Director of Pupil Services should be included in the minutes. Dr. Veronesi stated that the motion should read, "Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to hire Scott Rossignol at a salary to be determined by the Superintendent". Dr. Friedrich noted that the minutes should also reflect that the vote was unanimous.

Mrs. Geraci made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to amend the minutes of February 28, 2018 to include the motion to hire Scott Rossignol and reflect that the vote was unanimous.

In favor of approving the minutes of February 28, 2018, as amended: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Abstained: Mrs. Boyle. Motion passed.

B. Board of Education regular session meeting - March 14, 2018

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of March 14, 2018, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of March 14, 2018, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Abstained: Mrs. Boyle. Motion passed.

Next Board Meeting - April 11, 2018 at 8:00 PM with the Public Hearing on the 2018-2019 Education Budget in the Auditorium at Coginchaug Regional High School

Approve Graduation Date, Last Day of School and Last Day for Staff

Dr. Veronesi recommended that the last day of school for students be Friday, June 22nd and the last day of school for staff be Monday, June 25th, with graduation also on Friday, June 22nd. The graduation date is never set, by state statute, until after April 1st. Dr. Veronesi added that she appreciates all the hard work of the volunteers for Project Graduation.

Mrs. Boyle asked if the Board could contemplate graduation on Thursday, June 21st and Dr. Veronesi recommended that graduation be held on Friday. They have reviewed several variables, including having

all students finishing on the same day, and she feels that Friday would be the best day for all students to finish.

Mr. Augur made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to set the last day of school for June 22, 2018 with graduation on that same day and the last day for teachers being on Monday, June 25, 2018.

Mrs. Petrella asked how another snow day would affect the last day of school and Dr. Veronesi felt that having the last day on June 22nd would keep it safe at the 181st day in case of another snow day.

Mr. Roraback asked about how much time Project Graduation needs for planning and Dr. Veronesi acknowledged that it is a tremendous amount of planning and she is not trying to undermine their efforts.

Mrs. Boyle thanked the Project Graduation committee for their hard work and wished them luck in their efforts, but hoped that they understood that a decision has to be made tonight.

In favor of setting the last day of school for June 22, 2018 with graduation on that same day and the last day for teachers being on Monday, June 25, 2018: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Possible action to rescind the motion of March 26, 2018 to “approve Option A, which is the single building track to give Dr. Veronesi and her staff the maximum time to continue to flush out the strategic visioning process that she has shared with us.”

Mr. Moore provided the Board some correspondence and recommendations from the Board’s attorney on this issue.

Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to rescind the motion made on March 28, 2018 to “approve Option A, which is the single-building track, to give Dr. Veronesi and her staff the maximum time to continue to flush out the strategic visioning process that she has shared with us.”

Mrs. Petrella stated that she would consider rescinding the motion based on the process and the procedural part of this. She felt that the information should be distributed to the public and input received.

Mr. Yamartino explained that his primary impetus for the motion was not the legality of the situation. He explained that he voted in the affirmative based on Mr. Augur’s comment about allowing Dr. Veronesi more time on the visioning process, but shortly thereafter realized that they had short-circuited the process that had been laid out, primarily following the path to get public input.

Dr. Friedrich explained that, while he will vote to rescind the motion, he will not be voting against Option A but instead voting in favor of following the process.

Mr. Roraback felt that the vote that was taken did, in fact, accomplish one thing and that was community involvement. Mrs. Petrella hoped that that would mean a great response to the survey. Mr. Roraback’s main concern is that the state held the District hostage and they now see the funding becoming less and less. He believes that the Board needs to get beyond the building question and decide what program or programs will go forward for the betterment of all of the children.

Mrs. Boyle noted that she is extremely pleased with the vote tonight and reminded everyone that she was quite angry that night. Having been on the Board for 10 years, she had never experienced such a quick vote and she does not pride herself for being a member of the Board that night. Mrs. Boyle agreed with Mr. Roraback about the community involvement, but emphasized that the Board has a responsibility to all the taxpayers. She hopes that this new vote will provide the public the opportunity to digest the options. She felt that the vote on March 26th was irresponsible, in her opinion. She noted that she stayed on the Board for a term of one year because of the amount of new Board members. Mrs. Boyle charged every Board member to do its due diligence and asked the Board to get involved in every subcommittee. She asked for someone from the Town of Middlefield to fill her spot and emphasized how important the work is. Her children went to both John Lyman and Brewster. Mrs. Boyle ended by saying she was ashamed of how the Board behaved last Monday night and is now very proud to rescind the vote.

Mr. Roraback noted that the survey will go out, but there is nothing that addresses the program issue. Mr. Moore reviewed that there is a parallel process happening.

Mr. Augur commented about the divisiveness in the community around the two programs and wondered if past Boards let this issue lie dormant far too long. His impetus was to try to keep things moving in a more cohesive direction.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the community information session had been scheduled for April 25, 2018 in the auditorium but Strong School is holding their dress rehearsal there that night. They are looking for another location or may have to change the meeting date.

In favor of rescinding the motion made on March 28, 2018 to “approve Option A, which is the single-building track, to give Dr. Veronesi and her staff the maximum time to continue to flush out the strategic visioning process that she has shared with us”: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Abstained: Mr. Augur.

Discuss Preparation and Board Roles for Public Hearing on the 2018-2019 Budget

The public hearing is scheduled for April 11, 2018 and Mr. Moore explained that someone (usually Mr. Hicks) normally leads the call and deals with the legal aspects. They also need someone to give a general introduction (usually Mr. Moore). Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. Neubig will review the detail. If other Board members would like to participate, there will be a planning session in the next week or two. Dr. Veronesi asked if there were any topics that the Board felt warranted more discussion at the public hearing. She felt that security items should be discussed in some detail so that the public is clear about what items have been targeted as priorities. She has gotten feedback from parents who are strongly in opposition to armed security monitors in the elementary schools and would have a hard time supporting the budget. Mr. Moore suggested that those priorities be discussed at the Utilization meeting that will be held tomorrow at 4:00 PM.

Mr. Moore reviewed that the Board will be presenting a zero increase budget, with a gross reduction in expenditures of about \$318,000 from last year. Mrs. Boyle and Mr. Yamartino both reported that they will not be able to attend the Utilization meeting tomorrow.

Committee Reports**A. Finance Committee - April 3, 2018**

Mr. Augur reported that the Finance Committee met last night and discussed the current debt service projections for the Town of Middlefield as well as Regional District 13. At this time, the Town of Durham does not have any debt though they have projects in the works that may bring that forward. Both the Town of Middlefield and District 13 will have debt fall-off in 2021. They also discussed the \$400,000 that has been earmarked for safety as well as longer term investments in safety and security.

B. Educational Resources Committee - April 4, 2018

Mr. Moore reported that the ERC met earlier this evening and talked about the items that had been removed from the capital plan to move money toward security. Items being delayed include track maintenance, turf replacement, baseball warning track, paving the north side driveway and ceiling tile replacement. This generated \$181,000 to put into security improvements. They also talked about the need for financing in the future and also had a short discussion about solar equipment on Brewster School.

Mrs. Boyle noted that the community had voted down solar panels on Brewster School and asked why this was coming up once again. Mr. Moore explained that the solar company would provide the equipment and we would get the benefit of reduced electricity, with no cost to the taxpayers. It would, in fact, result in a reduction in the electricity bill. Mrs. Boyle felt that bringing something up after it had been voted down in referendum seems disingenuous on the Board's part and that the Board is not listening to the public. Mrs. Boyle noted that she had asked for the field house to be stricken from the capital plan and she did receive emails from people who are still interested in pursuing that.

Mr. Moore disagreed with Mrs. Boyle and felt that the solar panels would be a no-cost capital improvement. Mrs. Boyle stated that the taxpayers would not know that. Mr. Moore reminded her that no decision has been made yet. Dr. Friedrich felt that people said no to a bond issue and there is no bond issue here.

C. Policy Committee**Second read of the following policies:**

- **Wellness**
- **Title I and Parent Involvement**
- **Student Data Privacy**

Mr. Moore reviewed that this is the second reading of the three above-listed policies from February.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to accept all three above-listed policies, as read.

Mrs. Boyle commented that these policies primarily come from the state and our lawyer and it is the responsibility of the Board to implement these changes and that the changes are minimal.

In favor of approving the Wellness, Title I and Parent Involvement and Student Data Privacy policies, as read: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Communications

Mr. Moore reported that he had received letters from Shaun Whitaker, Zachary Roberts, Dale Robinson, Carolyn Gervais, Keri Sullivan, Theresa Weimann, Katherine Hamilton, Stacey Montemurro, Lauren Cross, Christine Burt regarding John Lyman and Maya Liss regarding guards at schools. He also received correspondence from Michele Delisle, Kacey Whittaker who sent a list of 84 people who either went to or have kids at Lyman, Kimberly Johansen, Alexis Meurs, Jocelyn Szymansky, Kate Spier, Megan Kavanaugh, the Assistant Coach from the Girls' Basketball team, Jennifer Sass, Grace Stone and Maura Hamilton. Mr. Moore reported that he wrote back to 78 people since last Thursday. He will look for Susan Oakley's email and get back to her.

Mr. Moore also reported that he met with the Lyman Parent Association last night and found it a very interesting, and hopefully supportive meeting. Mrs. Boyle asked if minutes would be available from that meeting and for the Board to be copied on those minutes.

Mr. Moore also received thank-you notes from 18 people that he wrote letters back to.

Mrs. Geraci gave everyone a flyer for the first Differences Day at Brewster School and thanked Nancy Heckler for her efforts. She also thanked everyone on the Differences committee. During this program tomorrow, the Brewster students will go through a variety of stations where they will learn what it's like to have different disabilities and then the Unified Sports team will have a basketball game. She also reported that she spoke with an administrator from Regional District 18 who told her about the hybrid approach they have to having a HOT school in one of their elementary schools. He gave her several different examples of what they included in their program and invited the Board to meet with him and see their program in action. He also mentioned that their CMT score increased dramatically after doing that.

Mrs. Petrella reported that she received a call from Cheryl Pizzo who was concerned about the busing distance without having an elementary school in Middlefield. She was also concerned about losing schools in Middlefield, leaving just one school in town. Mr. Yamartino also received a call from Cheryl Pizzo as well. He would like to understand the time that the children will spend on buses. Mr. Augur reminded them that there are currently students who make that ride. Dr. Veronesi will look at the bus routes.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Veronesi reported that Rob Huscher is proposing to build a pavilion over the grill area next to the existing concession stand at the field as his Eagle Scout project. The project is estimated to cost \$2,500.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, that the District accept the donation of a pavilion, with materials valued at \$2,500, to be situated next to the concession stand as part of an Eagle Scout project.

Mrs. Boyle wanted to ensure that the pavilion is built to Town building code and Dr. Veronesi explained that Rob Huscher has already started working with Rob Francis on it. Mrs. Boyle also wanted to thank

him for his generous gift. Mr. Roraback pointed out that a pavilion had been amazingly well-built at the United Churches of Durham and he wouldn't be surprised if it were modeled after that.

In favor of accepting the donation of a pavilion, with materials valued at \$2,500, to be situated next to the concession stand as part of an Eagle Scout project: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

A. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Veronesi felt it would be important to add a safety and security category to the strategic plan. She also emphasized that there are particular items that identify the improvements needed to be made in the well-being category.

Dr. Taylor asked if the Strategic Plan is viewed as a dynamic document that has continual updates that would need Board approval. Dr. Veronesi explained that tabletop exercises will begin on Friday with the Emergency Management specialist from the State of Connecticut who will work with Rob Francis, Jimmy Croteau, Sue Gaudreau, Mrs. Neubig and Dr. Veronesi. Administrators will also have a half-day of tabletop exercises later in April. Dr. Veronesi would like to review with the Emergency Management specialist what a safety and security improvement plan would look like to see if it should be linked to the Strategic Coherence plan.

Dr. Veronesi has also been contacted by Kate Cummings who is now the person who oversees all the DARE programming and she wanted to let the Board know she is available to answer any questions about an SRO.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that, in the area of student achievement, there are now about 12 teachers piloting iReady for assessments. The team of teachers has provided some very positive feedback and will be part of the decision-making process. The person building the data dashboard has begun his work. They are also continuing to put the assessment calendar together for next year. Using UBD (understanding by design) in curriculum writing has included a focus on the four Cs. Instructional rounds were held last month in the high school to identify next steps for growth and remarkable changes are being seen across the District. The high school has shifted from less student engagement with more directed teacher instruction to students being more in charge and more self-directed. Dr. Veronesi thanked the administration and the outstanding staff at the high school.

In the area of well-being, a team recently went to visit Norfeldt Elementary School in West Hartford and the Breakthrough Magnet School in Hartford to observe social emotional learning practices, including mindful-based strategies. They felt it was a highly successful day. They also met with CCSU School of Education and Professional Studies to discuss a possible research partnership in the 2018-2019 school year. The book study is ongoing, yoga classes are offered for educators after PD days and they are continuing with the Be Well video series.

In the area of engagement, Dr. Veronesi received over 200 responses from parents about communications. Inconsistencies in formatting, timing and the general protocol of communication were identified. Dr. Veronesi reported that these issues will be worked on with the consultant from ACES.

As far as utilization communications, Dr. Veronesi reiterated that an information session has been scheduled and a fresh set of eyes will review the survey. She agreed that the Board got a lot of

information last week and there were some good points about what needs to be communicated at the information session and what should go in the flyer.

Mrs. Boyle asked when the flyer and survey will be going out and Dr. Veronesi hoped that any edits will be reviewed at tomorrow's Utilization Committee meeting and they will hopefully decide if the existing information should go out as planned. Mr. Moore reminded the Board that the motion stated that the information would go out by April 13th.

B. Strategic Vision Update

Dr. Veronesi reported that they had a scheduled meeting last Tuesday and continued the work as planned. They continued to look at the primary themes, what's important to the District and what some of the valued design elements are. Dr. Veronesi stated that the term "chaos" came up at the meeting and explained that there really is order within chaos and if we are tethered to a structure, we can't always get to something that's different or better. The Strategic Visioning group is uncomfortable and Dr. Veronesi is challenging people away from landing back in a grade level or program defense. Dr. Veronesi noted that this is courageous, important work that the group is doing and everyone is fully engaged.

Reiterating the themes that have emerged, Dr. Veronesi mentioned connection, curiosity, creativity, collaboration, innovation and voice. They began talking about boundary-less learning and the importance of transformation. She noted that in order for transformative process to happen, we have to be willing to take risks, think differently and feel really uncomfortable but always affirm that this work is tremendously important and this is an incredible district. Dr. Veronesi also noted that she has never seen public comment followed by applause, regardless of the opinion that is being voiced. She noted that tremendous change and tremendous growth doesn't happen because of a guide book and we are moving in the right direction.

Dr. Veronesi stated that the next two Strategic Visioning meetings will be pot luck suppers to allow parents to be a part of it on April 24th in the library from 4:00 to 7:00 PM and May 15th from 5:00 to 8:00 PM. She invited all of the Board members to attend.

Dr. Veronesi reported that Mr. Moore had brought her a stack of historical documents, from 1910 and on, and one comment was about the great shape of the cemeteries and how it appeared that the District was taking better care of people who had passed on than the students. Dr. Veronesi pointed out that we are better than we were before and cannot yet conceive of how great we'll be. Mr. Moore stated that the first school in Durham was in 1711 and there are a lot of houses on Main Street that were schools.

Mrs. Boyle commented that the Board has to adhere to Common Core and she respects the eagerness to move forward, but acknowledges that it will take a lot of hard work. She hopes that it is done in a timely manner and nothing is rushed into. Mrs. Boyle also liked the idea of a pot luck supper and suggested that maybe baby-sitting be provided as well. She thought an RSVP may be necessary for planning. Dr. Veronesi agreed that they will try to make that happen for at least May 15th.

Business Manager's Report

Mrs. Neubig stated that the March financials are in the Board's packets and there is nothing out of the ordinary to report. Expenditures are running at 70 percent of budget and revenue is at 77.25 percent received year-to-date. The District did receive the first payment of the Excess Cost Grant in February of

\$305,000, with \$346,000 being budgeted. The second payment is scheduled for May and has usually been 25 percent, but she mentioned that this fund has historically not been fully funded.

MTA expenditures are running at 78.83 percent and revenue at 85 percent. Mrs. Neubig anticipates a surplus of about \$30,000 at the end of the year. They did use \$150,000 of the revenue for tuition to balance the 2017-2018 budget and upped that to \$200,000 for 2018-2019.

Snow removal is over budget by \$17,000 and does include the storm this past Monday. Some water pump repairs cost \$7,000 and the Strong generator is almost done, but has not yet been invoiced. Some directional signage will be installed outside of Coginchaug and Central Office during the week of April 10th. The surplus that is projected for the end of the year has not changed drastically.

Public Comment

Melissa Booth asked that the Board release all of the options that were provided by Silver Petrucelli on January 25, 2018. She thought that it would make more sense to people if they were able to see all the options. Mrs. Booth also reread Utilization minutes for the last couple of years and noted that, until January 26, 2017, they were still talking about two K-5 schools. She asked the Board to look at the costs for two K-5 schools. She also could not see how another 80 to 100 kids can be added to Brewster without adding a cafeteria. In terms of strategic visioning, Mrs. Booth is hearing that fifth and sixth grade ID classes are not multi-aged and they are looping which is sometimes not the best for kids. In seventh and eighth grades, a lot of people ask to change programs. She feels that nothing is broken at the K-4 level and doesn't know why the Board wants to fix something that's not broken. She thought that maybe strategic visioning could be done for 5-8 and leave K-4 alone for a while which would make a lot of people really happy.

Mr. Moore thanked everyone for attending and for their input. He reminded everyone that the Coginchaug play starts tomorrow night and runs through Saturday.

Adjournment

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

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

Meeting was adjourned at 9:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First