

Revised

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Board members present: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich (arrived a few minutes late), Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Roraback (arrived late).

Board members absent: Mrs. Petrella

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

Mr. Moore asked to have item eight removed from the agenda this evening as Mr. Rossignol will present in December. He would also like to add an item to (14) New Business (G) a vote to authorize the design and construction of vestibules at Strong and Coginchaug and to authorize the Superintendent to apply for grant reimbursement.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to approve the agenda, as amended.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Liz Conroy, a member of the Coginchaug Valley Education Foundation, explained that the foundation was formed 10 years ago with the mission to promote creativity and excellence in education for all citizens of Durham and Middlefield. In discussing their 10th anniversary, the most resounding factor that makes these communities great is volunteerism. In recognizing that, they felt that the most fitting way to celebrate their anniversary would be to thank those members of the community who give so generously of their time. On behalf of CVEF, she brought some cookies, pens and a very heartfelt thank-you to all of the members of the Board of Education.

Administrator Welcome - Scott Sadinsky

Scott Sadinsky explained that Tina Hurlbert and Amy Schaefer collaborated to bring a real-world experience to their students and invited Sammy Divito, owner of Rustic Doors and Decor, to speak with the students. Ms. Divito has done most of the woodwork in Bear's Smokehouse in Hartford. She spoke to the students about her work, her business and how she runs her business. She brought in some material and the kids designed some of their own ideas.

Mr. Sadinsky also reported that there has been a steady commentary that parents are not understanding Google Classroom. Brenda Parness facilitated two parent sessions to help them learn how to navigate Power School and Google Classroom. He also mentioned that vaping is becoming a concern in the

middle school area and he had a conversation with a parent who voiced her concern about seeing students vaping at the Durham Fair. A program was held last night, with another one to be held tomorrow morning, for Memorial, Strong and Coginchaug parents to work with DMYFS on the real facts about vaping and e-cigarettes. The November advisory session next Tuesday will be a whole-school assembly on the same topic presented by Dr. Michael Kalinowski. The advisory sessions are all well-being topics this year.

Mr. Sadinsky also reviewed that school was held this past Monday on Veterans Day and four of the five schools had special programs. Strong School held their annual recognition program (for the fifth year), including 16 local veterans. Steven Fitzgerald, the band director, is a staff sergeant in the National Guard and he was in uniform, conducting the eighth grade band. They played God Bless America and the Star Spangled Banner. The seventh grade ensemble performed "You're a Grand Old Flag". Three veterans participated in a flag folding ceremony and you could have heard a pin drop.

Alex Case, a student in the citizenship class at Coginchaug, explained that he wrote a card to a military person which was sent to California where care packages are sent to veterans, active duty members and first responders. He read what he wrote to the board, noting that he gets chills during the National Anthem during the football games. He would also like to serve in the Army.

Mr. Moore summarized that the Veterans Day ceremonies were amazing this year and felt that having these programs is better than taking the day off. Dr. Veronesi reported that Brewster had their first-ever non-musical/holiday assembly and the kids and staff were very excited. The veterans were all thrilled with the gifts that were presented to them.

Chuck Stengel, from Durham, stated that he attended the ceremony at Brewster and he felt it was his homecoming. Janina Eddinger attended the Lyman ceremony and felt it was very special that one of the classes made cookies for all of the veterans. The students also presented what they had learned about all of the different branches of the military.

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education special session meeting - October 9, 2018

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education special session meeting of October 9, 2018, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education special session meeting of October 9, 2018, as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

B. Board of Education regular session meeting - October 10, 2018

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of October 10, 2018, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of October 10, 2018, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Yamartino. Abstaining: Mrs. Boyle and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.

Next Board Meeting - December 11, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School

Progress Toward Strategic Coherence Goals

Dr. Veronesi stated how important it is that the district's improvement efforts are aligned and targeted and that people understand what those goals are. In the area of student achievement, specific targets have been set and progress is monitored throughout the year. Work continues on the curriculum with revisions in English, language arts and science at Coginchaug, seventh grade social studies and aligning assessments. Professional learning is being aligned with identified learning outcomes and she is very pleased with the improvements in that area. There is also follow-up with the teachers to see how they feel about the professional learning. The teachers do feel that they need more time to work together (as opposed to attending out-of-district training) now that the "in-house" expertise has been further developed.

They are also working on designing schedules and programs to align with student learning outcomes and she noted that there has been an 83 percent increase in the district's ELL population. They have also begun to look at Project Lead The Way which is a program for the high school that offers high-level programming in engineering.

In terms of well-being, the third annual mental health summit was held, featuring the work of Ross Green, looking specifically at hard-to-reach students. There is also an advisory program at the high school, focusing on the students' social and emotional learning needs. There is also Second Step programming at the elementary level.

One of the goals in well-being is to partner with outside agencies to support social/emotional learning, planning and outcomes. CVEF awarded a grant to the district in combination with Independent Day School and DMYFS to offer a series of parent information sessions. One was held last month at IDS addressing student anxiety and about 50 parents attended. Improvements in safety and security included the buzzer entry systems and specific door alarms.

In the area of engagement, the district-wide communication plan continues to be implemented and there are now monthly Connections newsletters from the individual schools as well as a District Connection, an article in the Town Times and plans for Dr. Veronesi to begin using Instagram. Another step is the development of the partnership with the sister school in China. Mr. Moore, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Falcone, Mrs. Germond and Dr. Veronesi will travel to China on November 30th.

Regarding the capital plan, Mrs. Neubig will present that plan, as well as some possible bonding, at the ERC meeting in December.

Dr. Taylor asked what teachers are specifically looking for in regards to time and Dr. Veronesi explained that they would like time embedded into their weekly schedule in order to meet with their colleagues to discuss student performance, plan lessons and share ideas.

Strategic Visioning Outcomes

Mr. Moore reviewed that Dr. Veronesi and a team of teachers and administrators as well as some citizens and students have worked on strategic visioning over the last year.

The Board took a quick break for refreshments at this point.

Due to technical difficulties, the Board moved on to item 10 in the agenda at this time.

Committee Reports**A. Pension Committee Meeting - October 18, 2018**

Mrs. Neubig reported that they elected officers, reviewed GASB rules for pensions and went through the bylaws. They will meet again in May.

B. Utilization Committee Meeting - October 25, 2018

Mr. Augur reported that they discussed various options that the Board might take should the Durham referendum fail. They also reviewed the details of the vestibule study and, given that Coginchaug and Strong were the best candidates for vestibule hardening based on their layout, the committee recommended that be brought forward to the full board for a vote in December. They also reviewed additional information in the area of safety.

C. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - October 30, 2018

Mr. Moore reported that Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed performance and monitoring achievement. They reviewed that the DRG has not changed in 12 years and the state is concerned about using it as a comparison for the future. Mrs. Walsh also explained her program on opioid overdoses and reviewed the fellowship she did at UCONN this past summer and how she has implemented it into the classroom. Mr. Moore also reported that a guest speaker from the state will be at the next Student Achievement meeting on November 28, 2018 at 5:00 PM to discuss performance measures.

Communications

Mr. Moore reported that he has had a lot of communication regarding the student athletic programs. The girls' volleyball team was ranked second in the state tournament. Girls' and boys' soccer teams both went into the state tournament, with great performances. The Unified Sports soccer team had a match against four or five other schools.

Mr. Moore also mentioned that the fall concert at the high school was unbelievable.

Mr. Hicks stated that he had dinner at Perk on Main in Middletown and they partnered with POPS and donated 20 percent of the proceeds from that evening to them. He applauded Katie Holmes for partnering with the district.

Strategic Visioning Outcomes

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that the Strategic Visioning Committee has been working since January and that she felt courage was an important core ethical value. She quoted Winston Churchill, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." She acknowledged the Board as well as the teachers, community and students for standing up and speaking and for sitting down and listening. She pointed out that Mr. Augur and Dr. Taylor particularly sought out the voice of the people.

Dr. Veronesi stated that the committee did not come to a conclusion on a grade level configuration that would best support what has been identified as the district's priorities.

Dr. Veronesi reported that there is a three-page summary with several appendices, reviewing the need, the various proposals, the process that was used, outcomes and the timeline. She reviewed that there is

declining enrollment, more building space than is needed and that the Board is trying to make a decision about how best to use the existing resources to meet the needs of the students.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed decisions that have been made regarding the buildings. It was decided that Korn School was the least viable of the buildings and that John Lyman is now the least viable building to go into the future. She reviewed the primary drivers that drove the decision to select the John Lyman School building including total square feet, number of portables to be removed, gym, cafeteria, auditorium space, available land, parking lot expansion possibilities and total cost of critical infrastructure improvements.

Last year, the Utilization Committee determined that the option of renovating-as-new was more of a financial burden than the communities should be asked to bear. The current proposals are a single-track design (Pre-K-2 at Brewster, 3-5 at Memorial, 6-8 at Strong and 9-12 at Coginchaug) or two schools of Pre-K-5 at Brewster and a K-5 at Memorial. These are the two proposals that the Strategic Visioning Committee considered; they did not talk about maintaining status quo.

The Board of Education considered community engagement, program design and approach, as well as choice, to be critically important. Dr. Veronesi reviewed the various meetings and surveys that were done. Looking at how the district would want to move into the future, one of the key conversations was about the approach that has existed in this district for 48 years. That was an important part of the decision-making process for the committee. The constructivist approach that is part of the Integrated Day program and the HOT school programming were opportunities that many people wanted to maintain in the district. The phenomena and opportunity of choice was described primarily as a benefit for the district. Some people linked choice to the strength of the John Lyman program. There were also a group of people who saw choice, in the past, now, and in the future, as something that actually creates competition and divides the community.

The committee used an asset model, by looking at what is working rather than at what is not. They received feedback from people across the district.

Dr. Veronesi explained that they had asked what people loved, what they wished for more of or less of, how everything gathered aligns with the three strategic goals. It has been sifted down into theme sets: connection, collaboration, contribution; voice, choice and impact; innovation, creativity and movement; and observation, inquiry and awareness.

Connection is the theme that was cited most often and passionately. The connection that students experience with each other, with teachers and staff and with the community-at-large was a significant strength. Staff members indicated the same experience and also described the students as unique in terms of their care and compassion for others, their interest in and commitment to learning and the two communities.

Other links noted as important include connections to the environment, curriculum connection in terms of authentic learning, connections to universities and colleges and link to local, state and international peers and causes.

Collaboration was discussed, looking at what happens as a result of connection and that greatest benefit is in using that link as an opportunity for action. There was a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts, collective efficacy for students, staff and the community and people of all ages described being confident that they'd be able to achieve a goal or make something beneficial happen for others by collaborating together. Examples cited were the Community Round-Up, Go Far, PTAs, Benchwarmers, Unified Sports, Lyman School assembly program and the Durham Fair. There were also many personal examples cited.

The theme of voice, choice and impact was discussed. Student voice included expression in general, and individuality that was unique, respected and celebrated. It was also discussed in terms of the individuality through writing, art, athletics and other forms of expression. The example most often cited was the assembly program at John Lyman School. The benefit of having the skill and confidence to have a public voice was highlighted. Choral and instrumental programs throughout the district, athletic programs and hands-on classes were noted as well, including outdoor education, innovation lab and places for students to exercise.

Choice was primarily centered on student learning and students being able to make a range of decisions, including what to learn, how to learn, where to learn, how to demonstrate their knowledge and what human and non-human resources to access. High school students noted the significant importance of choice in terms of who to spend time with, both socially and academically. Middle school students expressed some concern about the restriction of choice based on certain structures that prohibited them from being with peers, particularly the change in lunch tables that seat 12 at Memorial to 8 at Strong.

Choice was also discussed within the context of school choice, with many community members, staff and parents noting choice, primarily the option of choosing John Lyman School, as a distinct benefit of being a part of the district. While students identified the positive experience at both Brewster and John Lyman, they did not describe the positive experience in terms of choice. They all had fond memories of specific teachers or places and outdoor education experiences. Students, more than any other group, talked about the less positive and unintended consequences of choice, namely competition. High school students had wished that they could have been together at an earlier age as grade level peers. Some parents and staff also identified competition among students, staff and parents as a downside of choice.

Impact was discussed slightly differently from contribution in terms of a sense of making something happen individually or collectively. Student performers at the high school were noted as impacting the audience and the community through their individual and collective work.

The concept of innovation was raised primarily within the context of technology and STEAM. Our students are attracted to the puzzle or discovery of how things work and applying their understanding to think critically and build new understandings and models. Several examples were given of where this has occurred.

Movement was a significant topic with the lack of movement in a student's day being most notable. Much of a student's day is spent sitting with a clear relationship noted between the pressure teachers feel to make sure that various topics are covered. Students reported loving gym and recess and simply being able to be outside to walk and talk with friends. For students with more unique physical and learning needs, movement was seen as a critical step. Movement was also seen as critical to the well-being of students while enhancing learning and simply making people happy.

Observation was a topic discussed more by teachers and members of the Strategic Visioning team rather than by students. They talked about the benefit and importance for everyone to be still and quiet and take the time to simply notice without action. Teachers noted how quick to action students are, however both teachers and students reported that the pace of learning could be to the detriment of true observation.

The topic of awareness was discussed within the context of self-awareness and awareness of others in the environment. A deep and abiding sense of compassion and concern was described as a defining characteristic within both towns, all schools and between groups and individuals. People in our schools and communities are there for each other. Particularly important was the critical importance of students developing a sense of awareness, self-acceptance and individuality. While the district's core ethical

values of respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty and courage could be highlighted and discussed within all of the theme sets, they appear to reside most profoundly within individuals. People from outside of our district often comment about the existence of a uniquely positive quality that they notice when they visit our schools or when they observe our students in public.

Dr. Veronesi stated that the committee worked to define out how the district can move in the direction that assures and supports these themes. They talked in general terms about building design and academic programming. Connection, collaboration and contribution were the most important themes as well as reaffirming the district's core ethical values, positive relationships and developing a project-based learning model.

They want to continue to look at how best to organize the curriculum and thought about if it would make sense to organize the curriculum around science, social studies or civics. They realize that the curriculum is not working as well as it could be and is not giving the students the experience that the district wants them to have. They want to continue the development of the K-12 STEAM learning continuum, partnerships at all levels (including university partnerships) and expand local community opportunities for students to go into the community and for the community to come into the schools. Dr. Veronesi believes that people in the community want to be part of the schools and the students are truly proud to live in the community.

The team also talked about sustaining multi-grade options, not just in terms of what exists right now, but to continue various multi-age/grade opportunities through all grades. That does not mean that they believed a multi-grade option is for every child, but they would hope both (multi-age 1st and 2nd and 3rd and 4th and looping) could be offered. The same is true for the possibility of sustaining looping options. The positive of both of those came down to the sustained relationship with the same teacher and group of students over time.

A concern was raised that if the district were to go with a single-track option that parent involvement in a schools with only three grade levels might be less than if a parent were involved in a K-5 option. Dr. Veronesi would recommend that the district really look at the standards outlined with the National PTA for sustaining and enhancing parent involvement.

An important part of voice, choice and impact is the assembly program at the elementary level. The assembly program at John Lyman School is a defining feature of the school and for the students. It is a place for the school population to come together, to invite community members and parents and for that to be a part of the routine and flow of the school. They will look at how this would look in a Pre-K-5 and K-5 school as well as in a single-track design. It was believed that the assembly program should be sustained and implemented at the elementary level and to some extent at the middle and high level.

Dr. Veronesi spoke about creating a District 13 HOT school model at the elementary school and explained that the oversight from the State of Connecticut is sunsetting on this program. She has spoken with Bonnie Koba, who oversees the HOT school model for the state, and she suggested the district put together a team to talk about how a program could be individualized to the district. Dr. Veronesi reiterated that students want to have a voice and the district wants them to have a voice.

The Board of Education has been talking about talented and gifted programming, and Dr. Veronesi explained that that is included in project-based learning. They also talked about world languages beginning at the elementary level and opportunities for middle and high school students to explore other interests. There also needs to be a master schedule to support these priorities and working in consecutive blocks of time doesn't always do that.

Dr. Veronesi stated that there had not been one session where the topic of movement was not discussed at length. They believe it is truly important and the way the schools are currently structured has restricted students and teachers.

The issue of reassessing the purpose of homework and reducing homework was brought up consistently by students who feel “buried” by the amount of homework and by parents who would like to have time at home with their children. Teachers and staff members felt the same way. There also needs to be daily time for quiet and stillness.

The physical plant was discussed and how that could contribute to the theme sets that were identified. They would like spaces created to enhance the priority themes that were identified. Issues discussed included space for parents and families, more natural light, color and furniture. A very important theme was that students want to be outside to learn, explore, walk and play. Another common theme that came up with students was having a dog in the school. They would like the buildings to support more dynamic, living systems.

When talking about the different grade level configurations, they made a list of pros and cons. It turned out that there were many similarities from either option. The real benefit from having two K-5 schools was the number of consecutive grades for students, creating one less transition, including the collaboration between teachers and the enhanced likelihood of parent involvement. Another benefit of that option would be older role models. They felt that that could be available in a single-track system, but it would not be embedded in the school on a daily basis as it is with more consecutive grades.

A great benefit of having an early childhood or primary school, an intermediate or middle school had to do with the developmental appropriateness and the opportunity for teachers and resource people to be able to focus their expertise at that level. The curriculum is also designed within those grade level bands.

One of the greatest down sides noted to the one-track system was the lack of parental involvement and lack of older role models. The greatest down side to the two K-5 option was the potential that competition might be recreated. Committee members wondered how enrollment at each school would be determined, i.e. based on boundary lines or choice. If all options as discussed were available at each school for all children, there would not be a need to choose.

The team then came to the conclusion that they could not make a decision as it is really influenced by other variables that were outside of the purview of the committee. They identified themes that they thought should define the district’s educational approach and priorities. They identified what they felt the academic programming and structure should look like.

Next steps include the Board of Education making a grade configuration decision, followed by the creation of school- or grade-based design teams. They will work with the Center for School Change on the process to look at what the guarantee is that the district wants to provide to all students. An implementation plan will need to be created and changes to specific classes will need to be tracked.

Dr. Veronesi summarized that the committee listened to and honored the voice of students throughout the process. A video was then played for the Board.

Mr. Moore suggested the Board take a five-minute break at this point.

Dr. Taylor was disappointed as he thought that the purpose and plan that had been agreed upon was that the Strategic Visioning Committee would come up with some type of plan for a programmatic consideration within the proposed configurations. He acknowledged that there are a lot of opinions about

these issues and he does not see any more clarity now. He did not feel that the committee provided an answer as to how the programs within the configurations would look and he can't see how people will vote without knowing this information. Dr. Taylor had hoped that the townspeople would know what the district is offering in order to vote on building configuration.

Dr. Friedrich asked Dr. Taylor to explain what he felt was missing from the presentation and Dr. Taylor mentioned that people want to know if there are going to be assemblies every Friday or not, will there be multi-aged classrooms in every school, will the democratic practices be extended across every school, and will all of that be guaranteed with their vote. Dr. Taylor didn't feel that they knew how the programs would look within the different options or what constraints there may be. He did not feel that the public should be forced to make guesses about these issues.

Mr. Moore felt that the Strategic Visioning Committee has presented an outline of what can happen and the Board now needs to fit that into its constraints, such as financial and physical. They will then be able to tell the public where they're going. Mr. Moore felt that the report recommended that every student has the same opportunities.

Dr. Veronesi felt that the recommendation is that assemblies continue at the elementary level, but it isn't clear exactly what that would look like. She felt that the assembly program at Lyman School is a great model to move forward with. She also felt that a commitment should be made to multi-graded options, but not every classroom. Dr. Veronesi felt that there is a great likelihood to offer that in a single-track design. She felt that the specific details were beyond the scope of the Strategic Visioning Committee.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the committee felt that their themes need to be guaranteed in the design. There should be assemblies in the elementary schools and that there will be democratic leadership practices for all schools in the district. They also believe that kids must be able to be outside learning.

Mr. Yamartino felt that they heard a strategic framework tonight and that was the goal. Moving that forward, there needs to be an understanding of what the school configuration will be. He also believes that if something is really good and really working, it can't be limited to one group of students.

Dr. Friedrich added that there will be major choices for students and parents, such as looping. He felt that there would be more choice available when all elements are available in all schools.

Dr. Taylor stated that the townspeople will be voting on a particular school configuration in May, however a lot more than that is at stake. Dr. Veronesi also mentioned that other capital projects may be bonded as well as a school alteration and then the budget. She wants to make sure that the best guarantee is clarified for the grade configuration that is decided upon.

Mr. Moore summarized that once the Board decides on the actual grade configuration, the Strategic Visioning Committee will have more direction to begin work on what that would look like before the May vote, hopefully. Dr. Taylor stated that he thought that that was the process that was happening during the last year. He thought that the Board would know the configurations and what would be within those configurations, go back to the public with a survey, and then make a decision.

Dr. Veronesi felt that the committee actually decided that the programs really wouldn't look different, whether it was K-5 or a single track. They identified the items that should be part of the students' learning experience, but did not differentiate it by option.

Dr. Taylor asked the Board if they intended to go back to the public to get their opinions on the single-track vs. the K-5. He would strongly warn against making a decision without public input.

Mrs. Boyle would like to see the Utilization Committee bring forward a unified thought for the Board to vote on. Mr. Augur felt that the Utilization Committee dealt with buildings, not programs. Dr. Taylor felt that the process broke down.

Dr. Friedrich was not surprised with what was presented because Dr. Veronesi had presented it in pieces as it was happening. Dr. Veronesi asked Dr. Taylor what he wanted to have seen and Dr. Taylor explained that he had hoped to see the possible configurations, bring that to the public and then vote. He felt that that timeline was agreed upon out of the Utilization Committee.

Mr. Moore felt that the Board needs to make a decision on the buildings, bring that to the public for feedback and then reconsider that, if necessary. He did not feel that it would be appropriate to bring more options to the public.

Dr. Veronesi reminded everyone that they were first trying to submit to the state before January, and then decided to wait until May. Dr. Taylor stated that he clearly remembers agreeing upon a timeline that included a survey back out to the public and wants to know if that has changed or not. Dr. Friedrich asked what he thought would be on the survey and Dr. Taylor felt it should be the two building configuration options (K-5 or single-track), with a general list of what would fill through those options.

Mrs. Boyle felt that the public also needs to see the Strategic Visioning report so they can make an educated decision. She felt that this is a huge paradigm shift in the district and is an epic decision. Mrs. Boyle felt that this is too controversial and a little acrimonious and that she hoped the Board would all be on the same page.

Mr. Yamartino liked that the word “guarantee” was used in the presentation and suggested that the best way to show this would be to offer the specific guarantees in either option. The tactical piece can be worked out over time. Dr. Veronesi added that individuals on the committee had strong feelings about certain things and couldn’t necessarily agree on everything. She stated that the level of specificity being suggested would take years. Dr. Veronesi strongly felt that the district should have assemblies for many reasons, not the least of which is the historical respect for something that defines at least a part of this district and has worked for the children and the community. Those assemblies may, in fact, look different in two years. She does believe that project-based learning is the way for the district to go forward, but is nervous about guaranteeing that at this point. Dr. Veronesi does agree with Dr. Taylor about the timeline that was agreed upon and felt that the time for a survey may have been taken out when the timeline was amended.

Dr. Taylor felt it was a terrible idea not to go back to the community and survey them on the configurations. He felt that the Board would vote without knowing how the public feels and they have seen the problems that can cause.

Mr. Moore felt that another survey is important, but he felt that the public wanted to see what will be done before they comment. Mrs. Geraci had envisioned the next survey to be more about the program, not the buildings. She thought there would be clear-cut questions about assemblies and looping, etc. Dr. Veronesi stated that one of the primary questions they received in the information sessions had to do with the two K-5 schools and whether there would still be choice or would it be determined by geographical boundaries. The Strategic Visioning Committee identified what would be best for all students and didn’t say to eliminate choice.

Dr. Taylor felt that there were enough people out there who have strong opinions about the configurations that it would demand a survey, regardless of what is within the buildings. Mr. Augur felt that that was exactly what Utilization would be talking about. He also felt that the Board should set the premise in stone of a single opportunity for experience for all students.

Mrs. Boyle would like to see “more meat on the bones” and not ask the district to go on faith and concept. Dr. Taylor also stated that there was no evidence presented tonight in support of any of this. Mrs. Geraci stated that Region 18 went through this and she was told that everything changed within the first couple of years.

Mrs. Boyle summarized that the building that houses John Lyman School will be closing and she has gotten major feedback that closing a school in Middlefield affects the character of the town. She can't negate the fact that this will impact the history of Middlefield.

The next Utilization meeting will be held on November 29th and Mr. Moore suggested they review this at that meeting, including any survey, and whether to separate the programs from the physical. Mrs. Boyle asked who would be on the committee putting the survey together and Mr. Moore explained that that would come out of Utilization. He also mentioned several other things that Utilization would need to look at, including neighborhood schools, who attends what schools, etc.

Dr. Friedrich stated that the Utilization Committee started off being a committee about buildings and the process has now been turned on its head. He felt that Utilization should be given a vision and asked how the buildings should be arranged, but that is the Board's job. He did want the Board to be aware that what Utilization is doing now is a different process from the one on which the committee was founded, one of academic planning and the other being the building planning.

Mrs. Boyle asked what the new timeline would be as she felt that that would not be completed before the December Board meeting and that would mean that the vote would not take place until January, at the earliest. Dr. Taylor felt that the vote is only about the buildings, not the programs, but the Board doesn't have the information to vote on that in December. Dr. Taylor stated that the Utilization Committee will have a draft of the survey ready for the December Board meeting.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Veronesi had nothing further to report.

Business Manager's Report

Mrs. Neubig reported that the financials are running on track. The pension contribution has been made. The consortium obtained a price of \$2.57 and \$2.56 per gallon on heating oil, though \$2.25 had been budgeted. The temporary culvert repair cost \$10,900 and was completed in October.

MTA is running on schedule and there are 21 students (18 were budgeted), with potentially two more coming in December.

Mrs. Neubig did send the town allocations to both towns in early October, with Durham at 66.44 percent and Middlefield at 33.56 percent. That is an increase for Durham of .68 and a decrease for Middlefield of .68. The district lost 61 students, 29 in Durham and 32 in Middlefield.

Regarding the upcoming budget season, department budgets are due on December 10th. There will be a new transportation contract this year, a potential bus lease, and capital responsibilities, as well as bonding, and Korn School.

Mrs. Neubig has received a draft copy of the audit and the full report will be presented at the ERC meeting in December. The draft report aligns with the information that Mrs. Neubig has provided throughout the year, with a general fund balance of \$2 million ending the year (an increase of about \$625,000 over the previous year.) That would leave about \$1.5 million to balance the 2019-2020 budget, or about 4.1 percent of this year's budget. This increased surplus is primarily due to less staffing and lower benefits. She also reminded the Board that the salary line item was not funded at 100 percent this year and that seems to be working well.

The security grant needs to be submitted by December 4th and all of the work that was done is included. They obtained two quotes on upgrading the radio communications and it will be about \$170,000. Jimmy Croteau met with Kevin Donovan, the Emergency Management Director, who said that radio communications would be used more by the district than the towns. Another thought would be to boost cell service instead, at about \$10,000 per building. She did remind the Board that Homeland Security had said that reinforcing the radios was an important priority.

Mrs. Neubig asked whether the Board wanted her to include radio communications in her grant request and Mr. Augur asked Mrs. Neubig to provide that information to the Utilization Committee.

The new software is set to go live by January 1st. The staff have all been trained on it and the auditors are happy with it.

Dr. Friedrich asked if Mrs. Neubig felt comfortable with just two business days between the Utilization meeting and the grant submission, and she did. Everything is ready and quotes were obtained for everything on the list.

New Business

A. Board of Education goals

Mr. Moore explained that a draft of goals was sent to the Board members. Mr. Moore reviewed that Mr. Augur, Dr. Taylor and he wrote up this draft. It included objectives and the administration's view of the same issues. It was divided into short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, with Strategic Visioning and Utilization recommendations to decide on a course of action being the first priority in 2019. Mr. Moore would like the Board members to review the goals, email any comments and/or suggestions to Dr. Veronesi and they will discuss them at the next meeting. Mr. Augur also explained that he emailed a draft of the fiscal oversight short-term bullet three. Mr. Moore felt that the Board and Administration are fairly well-aligned on these goals. Mr. Augur did like the idea of keeping the Board's goals separate from the Administration's.

B. Non-board member committee recommendations

Mr. Moore distributed a form to obtain information on people interested in serving on committees and asked the Board members to return it. Mr. Moore has one person interested and possibly one more.

C. Vote to accept Merwin Foundation donation

Mr. Moore explained that the Merwin Foundation has offered \$10,013.14 as a donation toward the STEAM program.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to accept the Merwin Foundation donation of \$10,013.14 which will be used to support the robotics coding courses at Coginchaug High School.

In favor of accepting the Merwin Foundation donation of \$10,013.14 which will be used to support the robotics coding courses at Coginchaug High School: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Boyle thanked the Merwin Foundation for such a generous donation and Dr. Friedrich asked that a thank-you be sent on behalf of the Board.

D. Vote to approve field trip request

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the request for the CRHS Model UN field trip to Boston University on February 8-10, 2019, with the understanding that this trip may be withdrawn at any time by actions of Homeland Security or other law enforcement agencies and that the parents or guardians of the participants be apprised of this action.

In favor of approving the request for the CRHS Model UN field trip to Boston University on February 8-10, 2019, with the understanding that this trip may be withdrawn at any time by actions of Homeland Security or other law enforcement agencies and that the parents or guardians of participants be apprised of this action: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Vote to authorize designated officials to sign ED-099 agreement

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to authorize Kathryn Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools, as the designated official to sign the State of Connecticut permanent single agreement ED-099 to participate in Child Nutrition Programs and to sign claims for reimbursement and authorize Kimberly Neubig, Business Manager, as the second person authorized to sign for claims for reimbursement.

In favor of authorizing Kathryn Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools, as the designated official to sign the State of Connecticut permanent single agreement ED-099 to participate in Child Nutrition Programs and to sign claims for reimbursement and authorizing Kimberly Neubig, Business Manager, as the second person authorized to sign for claims for reimbursement: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Vote to allow food exemptions

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to allow exemptions for food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutritional Standards, CNS, provided that (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of a regular school day or on the weekend; (2) the sale is at the location of the event; and (3) the food items are not sold from vending machines or school store.

In favor of allowing exemptions for food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutritional Standards, CNS, provided that (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of a regular school

day or on the weekend; (2) the sale is at the location of the event; and (3) the food items are not sold from vending machines or school store: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

Recognition of years of service - Nancy Boyle

Mr. Moore explained that Mrs. Boyle has announced that she will be moving on from the Board and Mr. Hicks read a proclamation into the record. "Regional School District 13 Board of Education, Durham and Middlefield, Connecticut. Be it known by all those present that on this date, Nancy Boyle, distinguished Board of Education member since 2008, is duly recognized and acknowledged for her dedication to the children and citizens of Regional School District 13. And whereas Nancy Boyle, having served with honor hereby concludes this challenge for the responsibility of educating our youth. Be it known that by these words, that her deeds, her attention to detail and endearing commitment will long be remembered and recognized by her peers, the towns of Middlefield and Durham and, indeed, our children. And whereas Nancy Boyle served this district as a Board of Education member, her unwavering commitment to the support and success of educators and students alike, including their social, emotional, academic and athletic, will long be remembered as a guide for those who follow in future public service. And whereas Nancy Boyle demonstrated her tireless work ethic on many subcommittees for this Board, most notably Personnel Policies, Human Resources, Building and Grounds, Transportation, Communications, Negotiations, Student Achievement, Educational Resources and Utilization committees as well as Board treasurer. Her commitment to strengthening the Board through the creation of a Board of Education handbook and encouragement to participate in the self-evaluation process has elevated the Board of Education as a district entity. Her vast knowledge and enthusiasm have provided insightful direction and have proudly moved the district and community forward. And whereas Nancy Boyle is a respected and admired leader, having been a tireless volunteer whose intelligence, perseverance and friendship consistently elevated the work of the entire Board of Education. Therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of the Regional School District 13 Board of Education, on this 14th day of November, 2018, celebrate Nancy Boyle and encourage others to do the same and join us in recognizing Nancy Boyle, a member who has made a difference in the success of this school district and the advancement of its mission. All this, with our sincere gratitude for your years of unselfish service. By your actions, you have distinguished yourself and brought great pride upon your community, our schools and hundreds of children who will remember you for all the good work you have done. Signed, Robert E. Moore, Chairman, and Kathryn Y. Veronesi, Superintendent."

Mr. Yamartino also publicly thanked Mrs. Boyle for her service and also mentioned that she has taught many members of the public what happens on the Board of Education. Mr. Yamartino also thanked Kevin Boyle and Nancy's family for the sacrifice they have made allowing her to spend time with the Board of Education.

Mrs. Boyle stated that it has been an honor and a privilege and she leaves the Board knowing that they have done great things together. She wished everyone good luck with the decisions to come.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to enter the above resolution into the record.

In favor of entering the above resolution into the record: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Maygan Morello, from Durham, thought that tonight's presentation was a little confusing because she felt that a lot of people thought there would be something recommended even though she understood why nothing was recommended. She also felt there were two separate pieces being voted on and didn't really feel that another survey would accomplish much. She was disappointed at the number of people who attended the community engagement meetings and stated that she learned a lot. She felt that most people think that two K-5 schools would mean two separate programs and that isn't necessarily the case. She encouraged the Board to not slow the process down.

Missy Booth stated that she is very much for project-based learning and that that produces lifelong learners. She agreed that this is a big decision for the district and she and her husband moved here for John Lyman. She has been at all of the meetings and didn't find much of the information tonight to be new, but the anxiety of not knowing what it will look like is tough. She had also hoped to hear a recommendation tonight. She encouraged the Board to make a decision, move forward and make it the best it can be.

Chris Davis, from Durham and John Lyman, felt that everyone was getting hung up with Lyman as a building vs. Lyman as a philosophical learning community. She felt that Lyman can be Lyman wherever it is, but having it removed as an option is very difficult. She feels that hearing that the two K-5 schools could be community-based rather than program-based is terrible for her because she lives in the south end of Durham. Her grandson is starting John Lyman in September and is already very familiar with the building. It's very hard to accept that he may not finish his elementary school experience in that building, with that community and philosophical belief. She also explained that assembly is not an event, but is the culmination of an event. She also explained that no student is required to share during assembly. Mrs. Davis stated that a survey needs to be specific as people need to know the choices they are making. She also asked how staff would be split and how that would look. She stated that there can't be a student-led and student-driven curriculum without the people who understand how to do that. People specifically choose both programs and she doesn't think that people understand that making it one program would eliminate both of them. Mrs. Davis asked if the district was going to look at bus routes as there are a lot of buses that are not full. She noted that John Lyman had nine buses with 390 children and now have nine buses with 264.

Adjournment

Mr. Hicks explained that he typically makes the motion to adjourn the meeting, but would like to yield his motion to Mrs. Boyle.

Mrs. Boyle made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hicks, 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. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Alwaz First