

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

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

Board members absent: None

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Neubig, Business Manager, Ms. Manning, Director of Organizational Development and Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

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

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

Public Comment

Maya Liss, from Durham, was concerned about the proposed staffing reductions in the Latin program and felt that basically all the neighboring districts offer Latin. She feels that if the district is starting to take away academic programs and academic choice from the students, they may be reaching the point where the district shouldn't be operating a high school. If the district is going to offer sub-par academics but continue to pay as much per pupil, the students might be better off going to a different district for high school, either on a tuition basis or combining with another district to form a larger high school. Mrs. Liss has also looked through the proposed budget presentation but wondered if the big blue book would be at the library. Mr. Moore explained that it will not be offered this year. One issue that she had was the need for extended learning opportunities and enrichment opportunities, especially for students at Memorial and Strong. She would like the Board to look at how this budget supports that.

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education regular session meeting - February 13, 2019

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of February 13, 2019, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of February 13, 2019, as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed, with Mr. Yamartino abstaining.

Next Finance Committee Meeting - March 6, 2019

Next Board Meeting - March 13, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School

Ocean Bowl Presentation: Lorrie Martin, Duncan Bates, Megan Szymaszek, Nicholas Hoyecki, Brandon Hayward, Alicia Lowry, Will Ufferfilge, Luke Chariest, Dalton Bates, Natalie Hayward and Rachel Hayward

Mr. Moore explained that the team came in second in the state competition.

Mrs. Martin noted that she tells her students that whenever they can't get a question, they should look at the Latin root to see what they can do. There are three seniors on the team and she also has two younger students who started as sixth graders that are practicing with the team. The team members have to learn a lot of curriculum, including some college material, and also have to master the concentration demanded by the buzzer system.

Mrs. Martin introduced the team's mascots to the Board, Squiggly and Octavius, who have been with the team for 13 years. She cannot remember a year where Coginchaug placed below sixth place. The National Ocean Sciences Bowl operates across the country and creates the questions for the regional competitions.

Mrs. Martin introduced the seniors, Megan Szymaszek, Duncan Bates and Brandon Hayward. Nick Hoyecki is the junior representative and Alicia Lowry is a freshman.

Duncan Bates reviewed how the team prepares for the competition and explained that they each have specialties. The practices often involve a prize, such as a Dunkin Donuts gift card. Megan Szymaszek reported that the competition consists of 16 teams, which are broken down into four divisions with four teams in each. There are four round robin rounds and each team competes in three of the rounds. Megan then explained the scoring system as well as the timing of each section. After the round robins are done, the teams are placed in divisions according to how many wins they accumulated. There is then a single elimination, ending with two teams in the finals.

The Board then had an opportunity to take part in an Ocean Bowl demonstration.

It was then reported that the team won the Sportsmanship award for the second year in a row. The team won this award by being polite, well-mannered and thanking the judges and the competing team at the end of each round. They also explained that the first place winners go to nationals which were held this year in Washington, DC. and in Colorado last year. Prior teams from Coginchaug have gone to nationals twice, once in Seattle and once in Mississippi, where they took 10th and 12th in the nation.

Another student commented on the people and information in the group and explained that she felt it was a great opportunity to new learn things and to meet new people.

Mr. Moore asked how many students are on the team and it was explained that there are seven from the high school and three younger students. Mr. Augur asked if the seniors have looked for similar activities in college and Megan Szymaszek explained that she has applied to three schools that have marine biology. Duncan Bates has heard back from four colleges about marine biology. Mr. Roraback asked if the field trips in elementary school helped to plant the seed for the interest in the oceans and Megan explained that they did play a role.

2019-2020 Budget Presentation

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that tonight they will talk about per pupil expenditure and how that is affected by enrollment and capital which also includes a \$6.9 million bonding project this year and ongoing support of capital needs. They will also review staffing changes that are being recommended and professional learning as well as some programming changes. Dr. Veronesi reviewed that they work on zero-based budgeting with a focus on the three strategic goal areas and the district mission.

A. Per Pupil Expenditure

Mrs. Neubig explained that net current expenditures (or per pupil expenditures) is calculated yearly by the State Department of Education; which is net expenditures divided by average daily membership. Net current expenditures are adjusted by the Connecticut State Department of Education for various criteria. The district reports the expenditures yearly via the Educator Financial System. The State Department of Education will then adjust for student transportation, capital costs for school construction grants and other factors, such as adult education, health services, student activity fees and income from school lunch programs.

The second part of the formula is the district enrollment. Districts are required to report enrollment on October 1st of every year via the Public School Information System. The data being shown tonight is from October 1, 2017. There are also adjustments to the enrollment, including a pre-k programs, open choice, free summer school and school sessions in excess of 180 days. After adjustments are made to the enrollment, it is then referred to as average daily membership.

The most recent data was released in January for the 2017-2018 school year. Across Connecticut, 76 percent of districts saw an increase in their NCEP (net current expenditure per pupil). The statewide average increased by \$396. District 13 increased by \$690, even though there was a decrease in the net current expenditures of \$399,000. Expenses need to drop significantly to make up for a drop in average daily membership. The district had a decrease of 82 students in the 2017-2018 school year.

Mrs. Neubig then reviewed some historical data, including a decrease in the NCEP in 2016-2017 which was primarily related to the closing of Korn School. The audited numbers in 2017-2018 went to \$19,646, even though the expenditures declined, because the average daily membership declined at a greater rate. She then showed forecasted numbers for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 which are subject to change. In order to affect a change in NCEP of \$1,000 per pupil, there would need to be a \$1.6 million cut in the budget (4.25 percent of the budget) with enrollment holding steady.

As enrollment declines, expenditures do not necessarily decline in direct relationship because some expenses are fixed. Mrs. Neubig also mentioned that if Lyman School was to close, there could be a decrease in NCEP in the 2020-2021 year.

Mrs. Neubig then reviewed Region 13's NCEP compared to the state average, all regional school districts and DRG C. RSD 13 is below the average of regional school districts by \$880, but above the state average and DRG C average by \$2,000 and \$900, respectively. Since the 2014-2015 school year, the state average NCEP has increased by \$1,273, regional school districts' average has increased by \$3,600, DRG C increased by \$3,000 and RSD 13 increased by \$1,600.

Mrs. Neubig then reviewed the average daily membership comparisons and the statewide average daily membership, since 2014-2015, has increased by 17 students, regional school districts have decreased by

100 students, DRG C has increased by 173 and RSD 13 has decreased by 162. She then reviewed forecasted numbers and reminded the board that those numbers are forecasted and will change when the actual numbers are available.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the operating budget savings are estimated to be about \$925,000 if Lyman School is closed, resulting in close to a \$1,000 decrease in per pupil expenditure.

In response to a question from Mr. Yamartino, Mrs. Neubig noted that pre-k students are counted as full-time students for the average daily membership.

B. Capital

Mrs. Neubig explained that the district's immediate system needs are being addressed in a \$6.9 million bonding package that has been incorporated into the superintendent's proposed budget. This does not increase the budget at all due to the debt service being level-funded. This bonding package will go to referendum in May, along with the operating budget.

The remainder of capital items total \$3 million. Those items did not rise to the criteria of immediate system needs and were not included in the bonding package, but that doesn't mean that they don't have to be addressed. Mrs. Neubig felt that it was important that the district focus on adequately funding the capital reserve account moving forward.

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that included are such items as continued funding of previously-identified priority items as well as ongoing building maintenance and furniture replacement. This budget represents a partial attempt to make up for prior year funding patterns.

The turf is scheduled for replacement and the track is scheduled for maintenance. The original funding for these items was \$50,000 and \$15,000 per year respectively, but that has been modified in prior years. These items may be on a more accelerated timeline due to reports from recent inspections. The turf replacement is estimated at \$425,000 and the track will be approximately \$78,000. These items have deteriorated at a quicker rate due to being in direct sunlight. This can be pushed out to 2022, maybe 2023, but still needs to be funded. Dr. Veronesi commented that it will not be less expensive to replace as time goes on.

Mrs. Neubig reported multiple repairs in the various buildings, including roof leaks, condenser fan motor replacements, etc. These items are not covered under general repairs in the operating budget as they are unanticipated. So far this school year, \$108,000 has been spent. The IT power supply is a system of batteries for an uninterrupted power supply so that the district's servers will not be destroyed. The auditorium stage and curtain are aging and the stage floor is bubbling and coming up in the corners and has become a safety issue. The curtain has been used since 1971 and has rips throughout. Rental is \$1,000 per occasion and purchase is \$3,000.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that the kitchen area in the Family and Consumer Science classroom is very outdated and the high school has asked for an upgrade for the past three years. The proposal has not been put forward in the proposed budgets until this year due to other priorities. It is in the budget for \$36,000.

Mrs. Neubig reviewed the \$6.9 million bonding project and the dollar amounts at each building. There was a list of exact items at each school that are scheduled to be replaced with this bonding project, with the bulk of it happening at Memorial School. With anticipated construction at Brewster, addressing

systems with end-of-life in 2023 are included. There is also \$778,000 included in the bonding package for contingency. She did note that these are all estimated costs based on Silver Petrucelli and DRA's facility studies. The cost estimates are not current, making the contingency reserve important.

Dr. Veronesi thanked the board for their attention to the capital needs and the commitment to moving these items forward.

C. Staffing

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that there is a proposed increase in special education of .2 to the teacher's time in the three-year-old pre-K class, a special education coach and a special education teacher. Approximately 18 percent of the students in the district (close to 300) qualify for needing special education services. There are just over 12 categories that students can qualify in for needing special ed services from age 3 to age 21, in some cases. Students with special education needs may require different types of support, but the district wants them to be students who are engaged, empowered and thrive and contribute as global citizens.

The budget proposes an addition of .2 to the teacher in pre-K which is largely based on the needs of the current students. In the fall, there were seven identified students in the pre-K class and it is anticipated that at least three more students will be identified.

Ms. Manning explained that the role of an instructional coach in special education and student services came out of the fact that the district's mission is to ensure that all of the learners have the opportunity to thrive. The coach partners with teachers to help them improve their teaching so that students can be more successful. They analyze the current status, set goals, explain teaching strategies and provide support until the goals are met. Coaches have been in place in reading and math in the district and have been successful in supporting teaching and learning.

Ms. Manning went on to explain that the coach would also help assess students, coach colleagues, cull data, increase and improve SAT protocols, formulate IEPs and schedules, monitor progress and facilitate professional learning. They would implement curriculum, assessment and instructional strategies to improve the instruction and learning of students with disabilities. The student services department is the district's largest department and the coach would help to mentor new staff.

Dr. Veronesi noted that there was greater variability in the areas mentioned from school to school than the administration would like and the coach would help to reduce that. About three years ago, a special education supervisor was eliminated from the administrative team in favor of a Director of Organizational Development. At that point, stipends were created for three teacher leaders in mid-level positions in special education. This model has worked for three years, but the need is greater now. Dr. Veronesi feels that this is one of the most critical areas of need in the current budget and this would be the most effective way to address it.

Dr. Veronesi also explained that they are proposing an additional special education teacher at Lyman School and that an increase in staffing may be necessary in this current school year. They have looked to see if there are staff in other buildings who may be able to help reduce the responsibilities at Lyman, but Dr. Veronesi will likely come to the board in March to increase the special education teacher time by at least .5 in the current year.

Comparing the caseloads of the special education teachers at Brewster and Lyman, Brewster has three teachers with approximately 12 students and Lyman has two teachers with approximately 19 students. There are also English language learners at Lyman who need support. Mrs. Geraci asked if the caseloads could be broken down into hours and Dr. Veronesi indicated that she will try to get her that information for the next board meeting.

Mr. Moore asked if all of the special education teachers are qualified to deal with every need and Dr. Veronesi explained that the teachers are more like general practitioners rather than specialists. Some staff members have additional training in certain areas and in that case the expertise can be used to support specific students and other train other staff members. Mr. Moore asked if they would move from one school to another if a student had a specific need and Dr. Veronesi explained that that could be done, but scheduling that is challenging. Mr. Moore also asked if the district uses outside help in some cases and Dr. Veronesi stated that outside consultants are used in certain situations. Mr. Moore asked if there is an increase in the needs because of the 12 different categories and Dr. Veronesi felt that the district is better able to diagnose students now. Mrs. Geraci agreed that schools are much more on top of getting students assessed and getting them proper services than they were in the past. She also noted that autism is much more in the forefront now, with a greater awareness. Dr. Veronesi stated that the district assesses all students through various screening measures and assessments and can catch students at an earlier point.

Mr. Augur asked about tuition for special education and asked if that could be decreased if more could be done in-house. Dr. Veronesi indicated that this is possible and mentioned that MTA decreases the district's responsibility for paying for programming as an example.

Dr. Veronesi explained that three math positions are being proposed including a math coach and a two math interventionists, and the reduction of a sixth-grade teacher will offset the cost of one of the positions.

Mrs. DiMaggio noted that the proposal of math coaches and an interventionist will complete the coaching model which started four years ago. There are currently literacy coaches at all schools in grades K-8. There are math coaches in all buildings, in grades K-8, one coach is shared between Memorial and Strong. They are now proposing that Strong and Memorial have full-time math coaches. These coaches provide teachers with current teaching practices, updated standards and curricular changes, and data literacy. They help teachers develop action plans and implementation of instructional strategies. They are working on addressing report cards at the elementary level. The interventionists and the coaches are involved in planning and running curriculum night.

Math data over the last several years shows that it is not quite up to par with the ELA performance and the scores need to be increased. They are making increases and growth in the math area using these math coaches and interventionists. The interventionists work with teachers and students prior to referral to special education. There are currently literacy interventionists in each school, grades K-12, and math interventionists in each school, grades K-8. They are proposing the addition of a math interventionist at the high school and to provide a consistent interventionist at both Strong and Memorial. Currently, a math interventionist is being shared by Brewster and Memorial (for fourth grade) with another interventionist at Strong who is servicing students in sixth grade at Memorial. The interventionists support the students in the classroom and the teachers and parents by providing information so parents can support their children.

Dr. Veronesi explained that they have used a salary amount placeholder which is a Masters 4 level. They are fairly certain that existing staff members will apply for those jobs as teachers are very interested in

being able to grow in this area. When those teachers are replaced, the district will likely hire a teacher at a lower salary level.

Dr. Veronesi explained that a few staff members are being used to cover the two elementary schools in the library media center. Research shows that student achievement increases when there is a full-time, high-quality library media center teacher. Dr. Veronesi mentioned Jenny Lussier, one of the elementary library people, who is a model for this in terms of initiative and in making her library a place for students to thrive. Jenny Lussier embeds technology into education and uses it as a resource. A stipend position, called a key user, is a technology troubleshooter in each of the schools and that role would be incorporated into the full-time library position.

Mr. Augur asked about the salary placeholder on the library media position and Dr. Veronesi explained that that was a combination of the current salaries of the existing LMC staff. Mr. Moore noted that last year there was an over-abundance of students in advanced math at Strong and there was concern about not having enough for the advanced program. He noted that most of this intervention and coaching is not for the kids who are advanced and asked how they would help the kids who are advanced. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that there is a math coach at Strong who has been working to support students at all levels. Coaches are focused on all students and the interventionists are focused on the students with needs. Dr. Taylor felt it was safe to say that interventionists are for students who need tier 2 interventions, but Mrs. DiMaggio added that they also help support tier 1 instruction. Dr. Taylor asked how the district defines need and Mrs. DiMaggio stated that they look at the data and anecdotal observations within the classroom. Dr. Veronesi felt that need is synonymous with students who need support in order to move up to a level of proficiency and not the students who are accelerated or advanced. They are talking about how to provide more enrichment for those students and expand the definition of "need".

Dr. Veronesi went on to explain that the .5 Spanish teacher is in response to the number of students requesting Spanish at Strong. The increase in social studies is at Cuginchaug and is to meet the course requirements for students.

Reviewing the proposed decreases, Dr. Veronesi explained that the decrease in Latin, both at Strong (.5) and Cuginchaug (.4), is based on the number of students who are currently enrolled and the projected need. At this time, the proposal includes a gradual phasing out of Latin as it is currently being delivered. As far as area schools, Portland, Middletown, North Branford, Cromwell, East Haddam, East Hampton and Old Saybrook offer French and Spanish only. Lyme/Old Lyme and Haddam-Killingworth offer Latin in addition and that is just Latin I at H-K. Discussions about the Latin program have been on-going for a number of years. Right now, there are 74 students at Strong taking Latin and 50 students at the high school. The proposal is that students going into seventh grade will not have the opportunity to take Latin. Students already taking Latin will be able to continue to take Latin in the high school, if they choose to. This will likely take three years to phase out the program. They are proposing to offer Latin II and III and a combined Latin IV and V at the high school next year. Dr. Veronesi also reviewed that there may be other ways to allow students to have exposure to Latin, through course work or an after-school club.

Mrs. Geraci asked if there had been any consideration to adding another language instead of Latin and Dr. Veronesi stated that they have begun to explore that by visiting other school districts and are looking into sign language and Mandarin. Mr. Yamartino asked how many students at Strong are taking a foreign language and Dr. Veronesi thought that there were only approximately 30 students at Strong that are not taking a language. Mr. Yamartino summarized then that roughly one-third of the students taking a foreign language are taking Latin, but Dr. Veronesi explained that that was because students who select

Latin as their second choice are placed in Latin. Currently, 29 students are taking Latin at Strong, with 17 of them having chosen Latin as their first choice.

Dr. Taylor asked how many students are in the higher levels of any of the languages offered, but Dr. Veronesi did not have that information. She did note, however, that they have looked at the data of how students who take Latin perform on the PSATs and SATs. They looked at how the students performed prior to taking Latin, currently taking Latin and those who don't take it anymore. They also looked at the top 25 percent of both the junior and senior classes to see what languages the students took. The data is inconclusive at this point without a comparison to the data of students taking French and Spanish.

Dr. Taylor felt that the district is either reprioritizing the language offerings and going to explore other languages and it's not really a budgetary issue or it's a budgetary issue and no other potential languages should be looked at. Dr. Veronesi felt that it really isn't one or the other, but both of those considerations influenced this decision. Mr. Moore asked if Latin could be offered only in the high school and Mr. Falcone felt that Latin I through III could be held at the high school, but the numbers of students wouldn't be there if there was no feeder program at Strong. Dr. Veronesi also added that they have looked at Strong and Coginchaug sharing a Latin teacher, but the scheduling would be challenging.

Dr. Veronesi went on to explain that there is a reduction of a sixth-grade teacher at Memorial due to projected class size and the reduction in math at Coginchaug is enrollment-driven.

The final reduction will affect the ABA (applied behavioral analysis) non-union staff who primarily work with the students with autism. They have followed a 12-month schedule for many years and the proposal is to reduce that schedule to 189 days. This represents a more efficient use of the time of those staff members. Extended school year (ESY) is summer school for students in special education and the ABA staff works during summer school. If the ABA staff did not work during summer school, the \$69,000 would be increased by \$43,000.

Mrs. Geraci asked how this would affect their benefits and Dr. Veronesi explained that their benefits would be more aligned with the closest union which is the 10-month support staff union. This would be a benefit for the ABA staff. Mrs. Geraci asked how other districts worked and felt that it takes a very special person to work in ABA and that it is a challenge to retain good staff. ESY has already been cut down to approximately 14 days this year. (Summer school is 16 days.)

Dr. Veronesi explained that they saw a disconnect with the total time given in a 12-month schedule to address the programming and needs and they felt that it could be efficiently and effectively done with a 189-day schedule. Making a broad statement, the feedback from the district on the ABA staffing is that we are well-staffed, generally more than many districts and that the compensation is very competitive. Dr. Veronesi felt that it is a position where quite a bit of turnover is seen due to the nature of the position.

Dr. Taylor asked about the shift in music staffing and it was explained that the teacher will spend less time at Strong and more time at Lyman.

Mr. Yamartino noted that there was a jump of 2.2 in special education (which includes a coach), then an increase of 3 in coaching specialists, and a number of other specialists and coordinators throughout. Coaches and specialists went from 12.4 in 2017-2018 to 17, plus another in special education. He asked if he could get a breakdown of staffing showing specialists and coaches to see what the year-over-year look is and he also asked about the stipend positions. He is a little concerned seeing

the specialists and coaches growing, knowing that the district may have to reduce those positions when a school is closed.

Ms. Manning explained that they have talked about coaching on assignment, knowing that there is the potential to close a school. When they post the coaching position, they would let the teachers know that this could be a two- or three-year assignment and then they would go back into the classroom. Dr. Veronesi is concerned that someone might lose a position, but her priority is that there is a need and that it is addressed. Mr. Yamartino wants to understand the full impact of taking away classroom teachers and adding interventionists and coaches. Dr. Taylor noted that the summary shows that cost for coaches and interventionists is \$1.5 million.

Mrs. Geraci asked if the special education coach will be helping the students or strictly helping the teachers. Dr. Veronesi stated that they intend for the coach to oversee the student assessments, data analysis, program planning, oversight of support staff with the teachers so that there is greater consistency throughout the district. There are some coaches who currently do direct work with students, but the primary role of the coaching model in the district is direct work with teachers. Mrs. Geraci asked how the coaching and interventionist model would work within special education and Dr. Veronesi felt that they would know the curriculum and how it interfaces with the needs of the students as well as the particular student's disability.

Dr. Taylor asked if the sixth-grade reduction at Memorial is due to declining enrollment and how it will impact class sizes. Dr. Veronesi explained that some of that is due to the two-program track in sixth grade and that there are only two classes on the ID side in sixth grade. They are projecting sixth grade next year to include 19 students in ID and 66 in contemporary. Classes in fifth grade currently range from 19 to 24. Mr. Augur wondered if the district could transition sixth grade to Strong sooner.

D. Professional Learning

Dr. Veronesi explained that they have been discussing enrichment planning in large part due to parent concerns. They propose to address that in the project-based learning work, the Portrait of the Graduate, the visioning and design teamwork and professional conferences. This year, they are working on how that will actually be done. Mrs. DiMaggio and Mr. Sadinsky have formed an Enrichment Think Tank group to look at particular student situations, but also to broadly examine how planning will be carried out.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that they are looking at the classroom standards and how they can provide opportunities to students to keep them engaged and excited about learning. Middle and high school teachers will have professional development within the project-based learning area next year. Project-based tasks and assessments will also be embedded into the curriculum this year. They have been talking about what standards need to be addressed and how to raise the rigor for the students who are already meeting the standards. A group of teachers, coaches and administration from Strong are taking a look at this and they will pilot at Strong. Dr. Veronesi will keep the board updated on this. Mr. Moore reviewed that one of the board's objectives was to commission a study on talented and gifted, but it sounds like that work is being done here.

Mrs. DiMaggio went on to explain that they noticed that engineering was missing out of the STEAM programming at the high school, so they are proposing to offer an intro to engineering course through Project Lead the Way and an AP computer science course as well.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that the equity, well-being and wellness work is a continuation of the work that began this year. Dr. Taylor asked about the Portrait of the Graduate and if staff is dedicated specifically to that. Dr. Veronesi explained that the district will get the product it needs because it is critical to the reconfiguration. On March 11th, Dr. Veronesi and some leaders will attend a meeting with other districts to look at the work they are doing and then a meeting has been scheduled with the Center for School Change on March 26th. Dr. Veronesi explained that the voice of the people in this process is critically important and it cannot be just a team of 15 people that works on this. Many of the people who worked on strategic visioning are ready to move on to this project. The critical work will be the backwards planning once the Portrait of the Graduate is identified.

Mr. Yamartino asked about the \$5,400 for the engineering programming and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that that was a participation fee to belong to Project Lead the Way (\$3,000) and training for the teachers (\$2,400).

Moving on to new and continued district priorities, Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that they are going to continue with iReady (the diagnostic math and reading tool), Foundations (the word study program) and Data Dashboard (which brings the data all together). They will continue to focus on science, math, language arts and STEAM. Dr. Veronesi explained that they continue to keep money in the budget for the visiting artists and HOT school practices at John Lyman School. They are continuing to look at HOT practices for across the district, including partnering with Cromwell and District 13 potentially being somewhat of a hub for HOT practices. Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed the costs associated with these programs.

Mrs. DiMaggio reported that they spoke with both teachers and administrators and felt that it would be wonderful to bring back a summer school program. They have found that some students will decline if they do not continue their education over the summer. They are proposing a one-month summer school program for both reading and math.

Dr. Veronesi went on to review the details of the China partnership and explained that they are anticipating 20 students from Ningbo coming to visit in the fall of 2019, with a tuition of at least \$1,500 per student. They are also proposing a stipend for Kate Germond, the teacher who will be in charge of the program.

Dr. Taylor asked what the anticipated plan would be for our students to travel to China. Mr. Falcone explained that the approximate cost per student would be \$2,500 to \$2,700. Other trips students have taken have been over \$3,500. Mr. Falcone explained that the goal would be for everyone to have access to the trip and they will have fund-raising activities to help students gain access. Dr. Veronesi also mentioned that they are looking at ways for students to participate without actually traveling to China.

Mr. Augur worried that a student who knows their family can't afford it won't go to any of the presentations. He suggested possibly a needs-blind application process and then the financial issues don't fall on the student. Mr. Falcone mentioned that the Washington trip costs about \$600 and it is made clear to students that the district will help in any way that they can. There are different funds available to help support students and they also reach out to the Lions Club and the Women's Club for help.

Mrs. Geraci suggested that the Board of Education possibly sponsor five spots and put that in the budget. Mr. Moore pointed out that there will be some students who won't be able to travel due to things like food allergies.

Mr. Moore also noted that if anyone from the public wants to review the entire budget, they can make an appointment to see Mrs. Neubig and review it. He also noted that there will be several more meetings held to discuss the budget.

The Board took a five-minute break at this point.

Communications

Mr. Moore reported that he has received emails and letters about the field house, the library and Latin programs, the SRO report at last meeting, an incident at a hockey game, the need for additional Spanish teaching and a petition from about 100 students about Latin.

Mr. Hicks stated that the Paperhouse production last weekend was excellent and thanked the creators for giving our students an opportunity to perform.

Dr. Friedrich took part in the workshop on regionalization that happened yesterday and felt that there is a potential for enormous change. There are multiple proposals, with a lot of moving pieces. He did not come away from the workshop happy. Dr. Veronesi agreed that the information is changing every time they meet.

Mr. Moore also noted that he got a letter from Laura Francis showing the proposed budget cuts in ECS and TRB. He also stated that he has sent out the list of new committee assignments and the well-being committee is being established, with Mrs. Caramanello as chair. He stated that Mr. Hicks and Dr. Friedrich have volunteered, but he would like a few more. There will also be student advisors and a teacher advisor on that committee. An agenda will be put together for a meeting sometime in March.

New Business

A. Vote to approve field trip request

Mr. Moore reviewed that they have received a field trip request for the senior class to Washington, DC.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, to approve the request for the CRHS Senior Class field trip to Washington, DC from November 20-November 23, 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 monies paid may be nonrefundable. In addition, parents or guardians of the students participating shall be apprised of this action.

Mr. Hicks explained that he put in the wording about the monies possibly being nonrefundable because he is not sure he wants the district to be on the hook for any possible refund of monies. He doesn't think it will happen and that travel agents would refund the money, but it could get pricey if not. He would be willing to remove that wording from the motion if the board was not comfortable with that.

Mr. Augur asked if the parents are offered the opportunity to buy trip insurance which would cover certain issues. Mr. Falcone explained that they don't currently use a travel agent for the Washington trip in order to keep the cost down. He also explained that other trips have been postponed to later dates due to other circumstances. Mr. Falcone also stated that they have had students cancel at the last minute and the money has not been refunded.

Mr. Yamartino asked if that information is included in the notices to the students and parents and Mr. Falcone explained that there is clear language that the district has no control over refunds.

In favor of approving the request for the CRHS Senior Class field trip to Washington, DC from November 20-November 23, 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 monies paid may be nonrefundable. In addition, parents or guardians of the students participating shall be apprised of this action: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Discuss DATTCO Contract

Mr. Moore explained that Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. Neubig would like to move ahead with the DATTCO contract without going to bid. Mrs. Neubig surveyed 16 districts who responded to her question stating three districts that went out to bid changed their vendors, five did not change their vendors and six did not go out to bid, but just renewed. Districts received an average of two to four bids. Increases on the bids ranged from 1.5 percent to 16.65 percent. Negotiated renewal increases ranged from 2 to 3 percent. A few districts bid their transportation every five years and other districts have not bid in 15 years. Dr. Veronesi recalls working with a transportation consultant in her first year in the district, but the decision was made to not go out to bid. The same consultant has recommended to other districts that if the district is happy with the current provider and it's only a 2 to 3 percent increase, it is best to renew.

Mr. Moore felt that going out to bid is interesting and, in many cases required, but he would be concerned that parents have gone through a lot of stress this year and a new bus provider would add another level of aggravation. Dr. Friedrich would favor not changing vendors. Mr. Hicks agreed and felt that DATTCO has gone out of their way to get the depot at Commerce Circle and have done a fantastic job. Mrs. Geraci felt that it would be more fiscally responsible to go out to bid since it hasn't been done in a very long time. Mr. Augur thought that if DATTCO would do a three-year contract, then we would not go out to bid. If they said five years or nothing, he would be in favor of going out to bid. Mrs. Caramanello was concerned about the time frame. Dr. Taylor stated that part of him would like to go out to bid, but the other part is worried about general stability. He liked Mr. Augur's idea of the three-year contract.

Mr. Roraback felt that DATTCO owes the district some level of respect, being that the relationship has gone on for 32 years, and that they need to give a little back and three years would not be an unreasonable request. Mrs. Neubig reviewed that the original reason given for not wanting to do three years is the capital investment in buying the new buses.

Mrs. Petrella agreed that it would be better to have three years, especially since the district hasn't gone out to bid for so long. Mr. Yamartino felt that, since this is one of the largest line items in the budget, it would deserve to go out to bid. He also mentioned using different size buses as well. Mr. Hicks felt that there was a danger in going out to bid because DATTCO may not bid at all. Mr. Augur felt that if a vendor that the district has dealt with for three decades would not bid, then the three decades was probably long enough.

Dr. Veronesi stated that they would go back to DATTCO to continue the discussion to see if they can get any movement on a three-year contract.

C. Vote on new High School graduation requirements

Mrs. Petrella explained that the state has graduation requirements until 2022 and then, in 2023, they have increased the requirements. There is now a 20-credit minimum, but Coginchaug has a 26-credit minimum. In the future, the state will be going to a 25-credit minimum and Coginchaug will remain at 26. She reviewed the breakdown of the credits, both from the state and the district.

Dr. Friedrich confirmed that there really would be no need to change the district's requirements, but Mr. Falcone explained that some specific changes will have to be made, such as a world language requirement in 2023. The district will also add 50 hours of community service as that aligns to the district's mission.

Mrs. Petrella made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the proposed graduation requirements for Coginchaug Class of 2023.

Mr. Yamartino asked why they had to approve this tonight and Dr. Veronesi explained that the Student Achievement Committee has already reviewed this extensively. Mr. Falcone explained that schedules are being put together for the freshman of the class of 2023, so they want to be sure everything is aligned. Mr. Yamartino asked if two weeks would make that much of a difference and Dr. Taylor asked if these requirements had been provided to the board members beforehand. The requirements had been provided with the Student Achievement information.

Mr. Hicks asked to amend the motion to reflect that this is according to state statute, but Mr. Augur explained that the 50 hours of community service is not according to that. Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor accepted the amendment.

In favor of accepting the amendment to the motion, to reflect that this is according to state statute: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

In favor of approving the proposed graduation requirements for the Coginchaug Class of 2023, as amended: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Augur wanted to be sure everyone knew that the Finance Committee has invited the Boards of Selectmen and Finance from both towns to attend the meeting on March 6, 2019.

Mrs. Petrella also reminded everyone that the Student Achievement Committee meeting is not until 5:15 PM tomorrow night. Human Resources will meet at 7:00 PM.

Public Comment

Melissa Booth, from Durham, thanked the board for mentioning Paperhouse and that she was happy to see so many board members there. She also reported that the district has at least four teams going to Odyssey of the Mind this year and that the Coginchaug Valley Education Fund is supporting that. Mrs. Booth would also be interested in knowing information about the plan to move sixth grade to Strong and when that might be happening. She also asked if the district plans to keep ID until that happens.

Jacob Madison felt that the effect of the Latin program extends beyond just the kids in the program. He felt that the presence of Latin in the curriculum sends a signal to the students, faculty and the admissions departments at colleges and universities that the district cares about academic greatness. He urged the

board to continue the Latin program. Mr. Madison also wanted to be sure everyone realizes that they are talking about two specific teachers and he anecdotally hears that Clare McCarthy is a terrific teacher, but she really wants to have classes that are only for serious students and has not put an emphasis on retention. He felt that she could do that and the district could potentially have more kids making it from one level to the next.

Adjournment

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 10: 20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First