

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

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

Board members absent: Mr. Hicks

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

Tim Fisher brought the Coginchaug Jazz Band to open the meeting this evening. The band will be going to Disney in a few weeks to perform in a competition. He also mentioned that their production of Beauty and the Beast is from April 4-7, 2019.

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mrs. Geraci made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

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

### **Public Comment**

Craig Bradanini, the Region 13 Education Association president from Durham, reviewed the core ethical values that every administrator, teacher, ABA staff, paraprofessional, cafeteria staff, custodian and substitute teacher instills in students. He was disheartened by some of the comments made by both the board and the public with a seeming lack of respect that some of those groups were given. To refer to any of these people, the district's employees, as "overhead" exhibits a misunderstanding of what these people do and the impact they have on student learning. Unfortunately, many teachers cannot be at the meeting tonight as there are parent conferences but many others are present. He explained that the board will hear from instructional coaches and teachers who work with them to help educate them on their role and their positive impact. The Association works very closely with the administration and they are aware of the budget proposals. They may not agree with all changes, but understand the necessities. He feels that the administration was charged with a nearly impossible task and have presented a budget that is respectful and responsible. Mr. Bradanini explained that it is his responsibility to the membership to ensure that all members of Region 13 be treated with respect and kindness. He encouraged the board to work together to leave fingerprints that they are proud to say come from Region 13.

Noelle Durkin, a math instructional coach in the district, was present representing a group of teachers who are now instructional coaches. She was there to present some information on their role in the district. The official vision of the district's coaching model is to create collaborative and reflective partnerships among coaches and classroom teachers that are focused on strengthening instructional practices to promote continuous student growth. Thinking about the impact that they have on the district, it is important to recognize all the ways they interact with students, teachers and administration. The coaches' goal is to build the collective capacity of the school community and lead from the middle. They work

with students on a daily basis, they impact teachers with professional development, they participate in professional learning communities and assist in analyzing data and learning new strategies. The coaches meet regularly with administrators at the building level as well as Central Office level. The significance of this research-proven practice of instructional coaching is also visible in the changes that have been made in curriculum instruction and assessment over the past few years. They engage and collaborate in planning, developing and providing professional learning to all classroom teachers from K-8 in math and reading. The goal is to promote clarity with the Connecticut Core Standards and effective instructional practices. She quoted research by Jim Knight that 87 percent of teachers are more likely to implement new instructional strategies when done through a coaching model. The K-8 reading and math curriculum has been completely rewritten to increase the rigor and align with SBAC student achievement expectations. The instructional strategies have moved to the workshop model to increase student engagement and allow children to have a voice. Common assessments have been developed and are continually revised. Instructional coaching has influenced student achievement. Mrs. Durkin gave a few examples from a third grade PLC team where a 24 percent growth was demonstrated in the area of vocabulary. A grade one team focused a math PLC that resulted in 20 percent more students meeting the grade level expectation. A seventh grade class focused on discrete instruction on root words to increase vocabulary and resulted in an increase from 66 percent to 89 percent at or above benchmark. The instructional coaches in the district wrote their mission statement to encompass the elements of research-based partnership learning.

Patricia Roy, from Durham, reviewed that she spoke at last week's meeting and she felt that people in the room completely missed her point. She wanted to highlight a few things, particularly for those individuals who believe that federal laws outlining IEP mandates are the one reason that the district has provided and will continue to provide superior ABA services. Mrs. Roy truly believes that if ABA staff is reduced from 12-month to 10-month employees, reduce their paid holidays, reduce their sick time and strip them of their vacation time, the most valuable staff members will seek employment elsewhere. The district will have a hard time replacing them and they will deplete the quality of the ABA program as a whole. If this happens and one child ends up being outplaced, the district will have lost all the money that they thought they would save. The ABA staff work their butts off and deserve to be able to take a paid vacation. A reduction in benefits, such as vacation time, is comparable to reduction in overall salary. She asked the board to think how they would feel if they were told that they would have to do the same exact job, but with significantly less pay. She asked if they would feel valued, if they would be motivated to work hard, if they would stay at the job. She reiterated that the ABA staff are vital to the special education department as they are hands-on with the children every single day. The staff is the only difference between a bad special education program and a good one and deserve the same quality of care from the district that they give the children. Mrs. Roy stated that the board talked a lot about cutting costs to overhead without knowing who works hands-on with the kids and who has a more administrative role. She suggested the board find those answers and start making cuts in areas that won't cause the students to suffer and not to the ABA department. The current proposal has the potential to cause a great loss in quality staff with disastrous consequences on the future stability of the great special education program. She felt that this group deserves the district's continued support. Mrs. Roy understands the board is in a difficult position and cuts will make different groups angry, but she feels that the priority has to be the continued success and education of the children by supporting the active, hands-on teachers and staff, including the ABA team.

Linda Darcy, from Rockfall, was here to support the instructional coaches. She has been an educator for 20 years and many years as a student, leading to her doctorate in educational leadership. Her key points would be that there are over 40 empirical studies that show that you see great benefit to student achievement as well as the morale and longevity of teachers with an instructional coaching program. In general, it costs between \$15,000 and \$30,000 to replace a teacher and the number one reason teachers

choose to leave a district is not feeling supported and instructional coaching is one way that teachers feel supported. Mrs. Darcy had heard a rumor that someone asked if instructional coaching was necessary because the teachers weren't good and she explained that teaching is a science that evolves and grows, with new discoveries, methods and strategies being found all the time. Technology is constantly changing. Money is saved in teacher attrition and by coaches training the teachers. She summarized that she is a taxpayer, an educator and supports the instructional coaches.

Mariah Roy, from Durham, stated that she and her husband were present to support the ABA staff. They are still very sad to know that cuts were even proposed to save money. Their son, Patrick, is three-and-a-half and nonverbal. The ABA support that he receives at school is second to none and the staff are invaluable, irreplaceable and crucial to his overall development and future success. Cuts to ABA services and staff and their benefits or vacation time should not be explored just because they don't benefit every student. If ABA services benefitted every student, Mrs. Roy doubted that this would even be talked about and that would anger and sadden her because her son deserves every service he requires. She asked if the district would think to cut sports or costs associated with them. She felt they would not because every child can benefit from the sports programs. She then asked what percent of student athletes go on to receive pro sports team offers and/or college scholarships. Mrs. Roy felt that 100 percent of the students who receive ABA therapy are benefitting and that is why even mentioning cuts to the program is unforgivable. Allowing a student to struggle academically, socially or behaviorally by lack of access to programming is no different than failing to provide a ramp for a person with in a wheelchair.

### **Next Board Meeting - March 27, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School**

Mr. Moore explained that they will have to approve the budget for public hearing on April 10<sup>th</sup>, approve the notice of the budget for referendum, approve the referendum for the capital improvement program and approve the referendum for the question on the field house at the next meeting.

### **Progress Toward Strategic Coherence Goals**

Dr. Veronesi reported that, in student achievement, the district held their second annual curriculum night and thanked the coaches, teachers, students and Mrs. DiMaggio who planned that evening. It was a great success. A book study is continuing to take place with administrators and Mrs. DiMaggio rethinking grading. Coaches continue to work on report card revision as well as ELA curriculum revision. The enrichment think tank, under Mr. Sadinsky's leadership, is taking place at Strong School where they are looking at ways to provide enrichment activities and programming. Professional learning has also been held in these areas. The Next Generation Accountability results came out and Mrs. DiMaggio will review those at the Student Achievement committee meeting. They are very pleased to announce that both Lyman and Brewster continue to be tier 1 schools and are also schools of distinction. Memorial School has moved from a tier 3 school to a tier 2 school. The high school remains at tier 2, with just a slight nuance about student participation in PE keeping it from being a tier 1 school as well as the percentage of students who are testing. Strong School remains at a tier 3, again due to a slight area that keeps it from being a tier 2 school. The district's standing within the state is something to be very proud of. The professional development committee has met to plan professional learning for next year.

In well-being, the Proactive Parenting series continues and was made possible by a grant from CVEF. Dr. Kalinowski talked about student drug and alcohol use and was held at the Independent Day School. The partnership with CCSU continues and Mrs. Manning and some of the team members will be looking at grant funding tomorrow. The vestibule process has been finalized and safety and security protocols are practiced. There had been an incident last week where Strong School and Coginchaug were on modified

lockdown and were reviewed afterward using an after action protocol with Trooper Mark Hesselstine, SRO. In terms of equity, a board priority has been to talk to students regarding racism, diversity and equity and focus groups were held. Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. Manning have a conference call tomorrow to receive the feedback from those groups and talk about recommended next steps. The Board of Education created and convened their first well-being committee last night.

In engagement, Dr. Veronesi reported that the primary focus has been on a revised communication plan. They are also exploring different ways to communicate with the public. The board finalized the engagement survey and will be distributing that this month. Meetings were held for students who are interested in traveling as well as students and parents who are interested in hosting student involved in the international partnership with Ningbo, China. About 125 students demonstrated interest with just over 40 parents interested in hosting. The planning for the Portrait of the Graduate work continues and some of the administrators attended a conference last week with other districts, with the primary focus of the conference being about leading from the middle.

Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. Neubig have worked with Silver Petrucelli to develop the EdSpecs for the Brewster and Memorial building alterations which were received yesterday and will be presented at the Utilization committee meeting next Thursday. Dr. Veronesi also reviewed that the budget is a budget process and not an easy one and she looks forward to the respectful dialogue this evening.

### **Staffing Review and Proposed Budget Revisions**

Dr. Veronesi began by explaining that a couple of significant things have happened since she proposed her original budget. The proposed ECS cuts to Durham and Middlefield totaling \$596,000 as well as approximate TRB responsibility of \$114,000 could become the responsibility of the district. They are also in the bid process with health insurance and received preliminary offers that are very favorable and may have a positive impact on the budget.

Dr. Veronesi explained that she will review proposed changes to the budget while she walks through the staffing information. Over the past six years, there has been a 13.97 percent decrease in enrollment and a 12.37 percent decrease in staff, 7.46 percent of that decrease is certified staff and 4.9 percent is non-certified and other non-union employees. In the next two years, with the anticipated closing of a school, they are projecting that the staffing count will decrease by 15 to 20 staff members, both certified and non-certified.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that the administrative team got back together to look at their proposals. The modifications that they have made in staffing are to eliminate and math and special education coach proposal. They have also removed the library media specialist from the proposed budget, the .2 increase to the Pre-K program for three-year-olds and reduced the math interventionist at the high school from 1.0 to .6. Finally, there is an immediate need for increased special education teacher time at John Lyman and Dr. Veronesi would like to start that immediately at a .5 level and continue the .5, rather than a 1.0 into next year.

Staffing for administration has remained relatively unchanged over the past three years. In the 2016-2017 school year, with the closing of Korn School, there was a reduction of an administrator as well as the athletic director moved to the teachers' union. Moving forward with teachers, Dr. Veronesi reviewed that they had proposed a decrease in Latin that they felt was responsible in keeping with student interest, however, the administrative team has heard the feedback and the reviewed proposal is to keep the staffing as proposed for next year and continue to offer Latin in the high school and monitor enrollment as time goes on, removing the immediate plan of elimination of Latin.

In special education, they would like to see the .5 increase that would go into effect immediately at John Lyman. They have removed the special education coach from the proposal and hope to use existing staff to address the issues primarily in the elementary schools. Dr. Veronesi also believes that there had been some misconception that the special education coach was an administrator when it would have been in the teachers bargaining unit with other coaches. She commented that Noelle Durkin had very eloquently described the role of the coaches and explained that the district had been behind in their practices as well as student performance. To address this, the theory of action was to strengthen teacher practice in the classroom, to bring a level of expertise to examine student data, to have people who truly understood curriculum who could revise it, to have people who could support teachers and provide professional development which became the rationale of the shift to coaches. Remedial teachers had to change their focus and some became coaches while others became interventionists. Interventionists work directly with students with the SRBI model while coaches work directly with teachers and students within classes.

The math coach proposed for Strong School will be addressed in another way. Some coaches now share some interventionist duties in both math and ELA. At Lyman, there is a .5 coach and two interventionists which seems to work best in the multi-graded classrooms. At Brewster, there are people coaching and doing intervention at the same time.

The STEAM coordinator position was created a couple of years ago when the tech integration specialist was phased out. The science specialist position was created in response to the changes from the Next Generation Science Standards. The library media specialist increase that had been proposed has been withdrawn and that will remain at a 3.5 FTE staffing level.

Dr. Veronesi went on to review a slight change in special ed assistants with one moving to the instructional assistant role. Central Office staff includes non-union employees as well as IT and facilities staff. Moving to ABA, Dr. Veronesi wanted to take a moment to review the proposed changes. She explained that the changes were proposed for primarily two reasons: (1) so that staff schedule is aligned with student needs and (2) so that working expectations were aligned with other groups in the district who do similar work. Dr. Veronesi felt that everyone plays a role on the team and to rank order who does the most difficult job or deserves different compensation has created variation, disparity and a lack of coherence across the staff. The recommendation was made to change from 12 months to 189 days and remove vacation time as other groups do not have vacation time. Dr. Veronesi noted that they have heard from parents and other people that there is tremendous concern that the predictability that is so important to students who receive ABA support will be disrupted because of the proposed changes. She explained that it is not their intention to disrupt the experience for children.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the district has had the greatest degree of turnover in the ABA area, even before any proposed changes. They would, of course, like to see greater consistency. She will reach out to the ABA staff to meet with her on Friday or Monday to revisit the proposed cuts so that it is less significant with less of an impact on the employees. She will share that feedback at the meeting next Wednesday. Dr. Veronesi explained that the administrative team practices compassionate listening and considers this as they work through the budget process and make modifications.

Dr. Taylor asked about the difference between an ABA therapist and a special education assistant. Dr. Veronesi explained that some ABA staff have very specialized training in discrete trials. Support staff is more generalized and the ABA staff uses more a prescribed and specific method, including quite a bit of data collection and data analysis, in order to help students who have the greatest difficulty with communication, social connections, social navigation including transitions. They break students'

behaviors down into more discrete areas to help them make improvements over time. Dr. Veronesi summarized that it is a very specialized approach.

With the changes that Dr. Veronesi just reviewed, the overall increase would be a .6 rather than a 4.7 increase. She also explained that there are also positions that are funded by grants.

Mrs. Petrella asked how many years the coaching model has been being used and Dr. Veronesi felt that it was about 10 to 12 years. Mrs. Petrella also asked what is projected as for timelines with having the coaching model in place and how long it would have to stay in the schools or if they could be phased out. Dr. Veronesi felt that they will be phased out when there are no new expectations and when there are no changes in education. Mr. Augur asked what the coach to teacher ratio would be necessary for optimal impact. Dr. Veronesi wasn't sure about that research, but explained that their proposal has been one coach per building based on the size of the buildings. They are very clear about what they want the outcomes to be. Right now, there are no coaches at the high school level. Dr. Veronesi did explain that the proposal of the interventionist at the high school level was to address the decrease in performance as students move from ninth to twelfth grade.

Dr. Taylor felt it was necessary to separate out the coaching components from the interventionist components. He believes they are distinctly separate with different reach. Mrs. Caramanello stated that, as a classroom teacher, she had never been under the impression that the coaching model would ever disappear. She felt that it was a really valuable tool and they go way beyond teaching the teachers. Dr. Taylor is incredibly supportive of the coaching model as he feels it is a great way to implement curricular changes. Dr. Veronesi explained that the interventionists are charged with working with students who are identified through the SRBI model as needing tier 2 or tier 3 intervention. Dr. Taylor wasn't sure they have seen data yet that shows that the interventionist model is having the impact that they were looking for. He would want to see strides being made against the state and comparative schools in that particular group of students. Dr. Taylor knows that anecdotal evidence has been shown, but feels that it is not the way to make decisions.

Dr. Veronesi also explained that the interventionist service for students is required by law. She noted that some students will not make expected growth without intervention and there is a predictive progress of the growth that those students should make which is tracked over time using six data points. If growth is not found, they then look at the frequency of the intervention and the type of intervention. Dr. Veronesi proposed that they look at this issue in the Student Achievement Committee.

Dr. Taylor asked who would be charged with the required intervention if the district did, in fact, not have interventionists. Dr. Veronesi explained that the district used to have remedial reading and remedial math teachers. She also felt that that would add increased responsibility on the classroom teacher. Dr. Veronesi explained that the remedial reading staff became either coaches or interventionists.

Dr. Friedrich commented that one of the things that concerns him is that to say interventionists only serve the students that they work with ignores the fact that if they're not doing it, it becomes a burden on the classroom teacher and therefore impacts all students. Dr. Taylor agrees that having an interventionist will help the classroom teacher, but is trying to figure out the most efficient and effective way to deliver that education to students. Dr. Veronesi also reviewed that the ABA therapists also do not work singularly with the students. The classroom teacher, the special ed teacher, OT, PT and speech are all linked. The same applies to coaches and interventionists. Dr. Veronesi summarized that they believe this is the team model that is right for teachers and students that results in improved student experience and growth over time.

Dr. Veronesi also noted that they would love science coaches and interventionists as well. She also reviewed a slide showing the change over time from remedial to coaches and interventionists.

Mrs. DiMaggio reiterated that the district is required by law to have interventions available for students. She does believe the model is working and she does have data that she can share in Student Achievement.

Mr. Yamartino addressed a comment that had been made at last meeting that the administrators didn't know how many people were working for them, who they were or what they did and felt that nothing could be further from the truth. He publicly apologized to any administrators, teachers or staff for a comment like that because he feels that it was way out of line. When he raised the issue about coaches, he was saying that he personally did not know how many coaches there were in which years and in which schools. He was also not saying that coaches were not valuable. He was simply trying to understand the level of investment and how it is changing over time.

Mr. Yamartino reviewed that the district's target is to have one coach in each building, excluding the high school in ELA and one in math, a total of roughly eight coaches. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that currently there is a .5 reading coach and a full-time math coach at Lyman. Reading coaches are part-time reading and part-time interventionist and there is a full-time math coach at Brewster. At Memorial, there is a full-time reading coach but the math coach serves as a coach at Strong and as an interventionist for fifth grade as well as a math coach for the rest of Memorial. Mr. Yamartino thanked Dr. Veronesi for providing the information. He also verified that reading and ELA coaches are in fact the same and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that they are all literacy coaches.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that they did come up with a different proposal for coaching at Strong School than was originally proposed, but they do feel confident that the outcomes can be achieved. Mrs. DiMaggio felt that it would work as long as they get the interventionist at Memorial.

Mr. Yamartino also asked if there are statistics that show the number of students who receive intervention. Dr. Veronesi explained that that is a fluid number and should remain fluid. Mr. Yamartino would like to see average numbers over the last three years. Mrs. DiMaggio will try to get that information. Regarding the ABA staffing, Mr. Yamartino asked about ABA hours during the summer and verified that it was at four weeks, 18 days and is now at four weeks, 16 days. He mentioned that he tutored special needs students when he was in school and found that if they missed even a week, it set the student back tremendously. Mr. Yamartino felt that these are some of the district's most needy students and the more the district can do and the earlier it is done, the sooner the amount of services can be reduced. He wondered whether the board should actually be looking at trying to increase these services, particularly in the summer months.

Dr. Veronesi explained that ABA staff used to be at school every day of the school year, the April school break and throughout the summer except the first week in August. The district was fully staffed, but did not always have the number of students that warranted the staffing level. As time went on, parents were not sending their students as much as they had previously and the ratio of staff to students got out of alignment, with more staff than was necessary. Dr. Veronesi understands the concern about the students losing ground, but explained that they were, in part, responding to the actual participation. She also explained that they are re-examining the initial proposal as they hear the feedback.

Mr. Moore also pointed out that the last two Teachers of the Year were both coaches except for Tim Fisher.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that every principal went through their budget, every Central Office administrator went through their budget and she asked for some direction now from the board. Mr. Moore explained that he had looked at the numbers that are affecting the towns and both towns are losing ECS grants (\$593,627). They will also be required to pay into the state teachers' retirement fund (\$114,947). The reduction in staff from 4.7 to .6 will reduce the budget by roughly \$280,000. If the board could end up with a budget that assumes the ECS loss as a reduction in the budget and absorbs the TRB, they would have to assume a \$708,000 cost and the \$114,947 would have to come out of other places as well. He felt that the staff reduction is a very responsible proposal, and they would need to cut the \$593,627 out of the budget and add \$114,947 to the district's budget instead of to the towns. He also mentioned that there will be a savings in insurance. Mr. Moore understands that it will be difficult to get that point, but feels that there are opportunities to find areas to save.

Mr. Moore summarized that Middlefield would get about a \$300,000 or \$400,000 reduction in the budget and Durham would have a very minor increase, due to the shift in enrollment.

Mrs. Neubig explained that the closest information she has to that scenario would result in a net budget decrease of 1.78 percent. The public would vote on a .67 increase as opposed to the 2.44 which was the original proposal. That would result in an increase to Durham of \$263,000 as opposed to \$698,000 and Middlefield would see a savings of \$301,000 from a savings of \$82,000. That budget includes maintaining Latin at the high school only and no changes as of yet in ABA. Mr. Yamartino asked how close this gets the district to the MBR and it was explained that it would be about \$400,000 away. He then began to propose that the board play the capital shell game, but Mr. Moore cautioned him that if the bonding issue failed there would be no capital at all.

Mr. Augur asked if there was any room in non-certified staff at Central Office and Dr. Veronesi agreed to look at that. Dr. Friedrich felt that, short of the board identifying programs, they need to identify a target and ask Dr. Veronesi to look at how the organization should be reconfigured to fit that target. He does feel that it is the board's responsibility to identify programs as it would be unfair to lay that on Dr. Veronesi. He asked Dr. Veronesi what she would need from the board and she explained that she would need a number. She and her team have identified priorities and are waiting to make final decisions based on a number. Dr. Taylor didn't feel that they needed a number and would more want the board to identify its priorities. He gave an example of adding two coaches and an interventionist back in if the SRO is taken out. Dr. Taylor noted that the board's policy statements specifically outline that it is their job to set priorities and they done a poor job of that in the past.

Dr. Friedrich proposed that the board consider a particular framework that cuts to academic services, including academic support services, should be matched by cuts in extracurricular activities. He believes that, as the district gets smaller, the same richness cannot be maintained. Dr. Veronesi explained that cuts in athletics that have been recommended in the past have not gone over very well and people are very vocal. She did comment that they do have proposed athletics cuts for next week because they agree that the hit cannot be just in the things that affect students in the classroom. The administrative team would not propose the elimination of the SRO as they do not feel there are in-house alternatives to address the issues that caused them to propose an SRO in the first place.

Mr. Moore reiterated that he believes the \$700,000-plus reduction would be a reasonable way to go and hold the line on any staff changes. Mr. Yamartino felt that the district should try to get as close to the MBR number as possible because the last time a school was closed, a tremendous amount of savings was identified but they weren't able to realize it in the budget because of the restrictions by the state. He would like to avoid that situation the next time. Mr. Yamartino also mentioned that if they cut capital and the bonding proposal gets voted down, they can secure an agreement with the towns that the district will



overspend that line item and the towns can supply additional funding. Mr. Moore did feel that faculty cuts would be necessary at that point.

Mr. Yamartino is confident that the capital will pass if the board is very clear that if it is not passed, schools will need to be closed in the middle of the year because heating systems aren't working. He believes that as long as they are clear in articulating everything in that capital budget, there shouldn't be a problem passing it.

Mr. Augur felt that Mr. Moore's comment about it necessitating faculty cuts is disingenuous because the SRO option would still exist. Dr. Veronesi stated that she would cut somewhere else. She also felt that proposing certain budget cuts next week may totally derail the budget process. She also felt that elimination of the SRO before year one is even over could have the same effect. Mr. Augur suggested replacing the SRO with something else and felt that it would be an interesting discussion. He also agreed with Dr. Taylor that these priorities should have been set very early in the school year. Dr. Veronesi felt that the program level prioritization is what they do as an administrative team and Mr. Augur stated that, if that were the case, he would have loved to hear about Latin much earlier. Dr. Taylor also mentioned the library media specialist and that the district has libraries that are not open every day.

Dr. Taylor felt that the policies clearly state that the board should be involved in the prioritization and should not be faced with this position now. Dr. Friedrich agreed and felt that the board should present the budget and the administration figures out how that money is used. He also agreed that the board needs to be on board for quite a length of time, not just at the last minute. As far as the SRO, Dr. Friedrich believes that Dr. Veronesi is the person who knows what's really going on.

Dr. Veronesi stated that she had shared the Latin cut at the January treat based on what was being seen about historical enrollment, staffing and looking forward, but until the public responds it appears as a non-issue for the board and administration. She knows that there are certain things that the public finds very unpopular. Dr. Taylor felt that a cut is very different than elimination of the program and Mr. Augur would have liked more information. Dr. Friedrich suggested that the board may need a retreat to re-examine this area of responsibilities.

Mrs. Petrella asked what the numbers are now and Mrs. Neubig stated that the closest she has to what Mr. Moore had mentioned would be a 1.78 net decrease. Mrs. Petrella stated that she is not in favor of cutting the SRO as she has seen how students interact with him. She is also pleased that the Latin program is not being eliminated and that the administration is looking again at the ABA. She is also happy that the ECS and TRB are being addressed. Mrs. Petrella would like to see it close to the MBR, but also felt that maybe some pressure needs to be put on the state to relax the MBR when a school is closed.

Mrs. Neubig stated that there are additional MBR provisions being proposed to the state. She feels that the waivers would be a lot greater and it seems to be more flexible and fluid every year.

Mr. Moore summarized that he'd like to see the insurance numbers and any proposed reductions on Monday. That would leave time on Tuesday to make any other adjustments and then the board could vote on Wednesday. Dr. Friedrich wanted to confirm that Mr. Moore is suggesting that the budget be further reduced by the \$708,000 by whatever means. Mr. Moore explained that the elimination of the four positions that Dr. Veronesi proposed would be part of the \$700,000, but this is still very hard to do. Dr. Friedrich felt that this is not going to be pleasant as long as the state's budget is shrinking. Dr. Taylor felt that the declining enrollment makes it even more difficult to keep the per pupil expenditures from going through the roof.

The board then took a five-minute break.

## Committee Reports

### A. Well-Being Committee meeting - March 19, 2019

Mrs. Caramanello explained that the Well-Being Committee had their first meeting yesterday which included Amy Schaefer, a teacher advisor, and Molly Yale and Conner Byrne, the two student advisors and a parent. They reviewed the Board of Education well-being and engagement goals as well as the strategic coherence goals. The charge for the committee is to ensure that RSD 13 offers an environment that enhances the well-being of all students, staff and families. They had discussions about what well-being is in the district, including stress and anxiety, safety, bullying, social media and drugs and alcohol.

Mrs. Schaefer and Mrs. Manning shared what has been done on the district's well-being committee and they have developed social-emotional learning programs, including Second Step and Advisory. They have partnered with CCSU and are working on equity as well. Suggestions were made for the committee to reach out to local wellness organizations. Mr. Augur reviewed the draft of the engagement survey which will be distributed to RSD 13 staff and some suggestions were made. They also suggested that another survey be sent for staff and student input. Their next meeting has been scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4:00 PM.

Mr. Moore added that they would like the board to approve the engagement survey tonight. The survey will be distributed with a cover letter from Mr. Moore explaining why it's being done. The survey is on Survey Monkey and requires anonymity in virtually all parts of it. The final version had been emailed out to everyone. Mr. Moore reviewed the parts of the survey and explained the rating scale. Mr. Augur added that they felt a three-week window would be sufficient to allow for responses. Dr. Veronesi suggested the word "evaluate" be changed to "gather feedback." Mr. Augur changed the wording to reflect upon its performance. The results can then be evaluated at the May board meeting.

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to have the survey distributed this week as was reviewed with a cover letter by Mr. Moore.*

*In favor of having the survey distributed this week, as reviewed: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

## Public Comment

Chris Davis, from Durham, is a reading interventionist at John Lyman School and wanted to clarify that she has had six different titles. Her work has always been working directly with small groups of children to improve their reading skills and fluency and to help them become lifelong readers. Children are suffering with reading as they are expected to read earlier and earlier. When she first started in the 90s, they did not service first and second grade students. All of the research says that children need early intervention. The coaches are key in introducing new curriculum and interventionists work with the classroom teachers directly as well. They work with teachers to help prevent other students from falling into that need and they do that on their own time, before school begins. A big boost has been the literary tutors who help keep the kids from falling back into needing help. In summary, Mrs. Davis felt that their job is to change the students' trajectory and to close the gap.

Jeff Landry, an ABA therapist at Brewster, pointed out that there are 11 staff members, six of them have been there over 10 years and three of the remaining five have been there for over five years. He doesn't feel there has been a high turnover with the positions that remain. Like the coaches, the ABA therapists put everything into practice, including OT, PT, special ed and regular ed all day, every day. They also help the classroom teachers with behavioral strategies for the entire class. He explained that they do real-time modifications at all times of the day. This includes their work, their behaviors, their social interactions and the environment around them. A lot of students are one-to-one and the therapists are there to help the students understand the situation they're in. A lot of the work that ABA therapists do is social and they work on that over the summer as well. They collaborate with the teachers and administrators and shadow students in class or pull them out for other work.

Missy Booth, from Durham, stated that she got a text from Maya Liss asking for clarification about the Latin program. Dr. Veronesi stated that there would be no change to the proposal that was made, which is .5 Latin at Strong School meaning that Latin will be offered in eighth grade and .6 at the high school. In the following year, Latin will only be offered in the high school but they are no longer talking about the elimination of Latin. Mrs. Booth also found it interesting that they talked about Second Step because she only found out about that program the other day when a third/fourth class shared it at Lyman. Mrs. Booth also mentioned that the district had four teams for Odyssey of the Mind and two of them scored second place which got them invited to the national competition in Michigan in May. They are not sure yet if they are going, but it is very exciting. The primary division (K-2) does not get judged, but they got very positive feedback and they also scored 93 out of 100 on spontaneous questions.

Mr. Moore thanked everyone for coming and particularly thanked the teachers, staff and ABA people for speaking out. He congratulated everyone on all of their work.

### **Adjournment**

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

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

Meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First