

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, May 29, 2019 at 6:30 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

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

Board members absent: Mr. Augur and Mrs. Caramanello

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

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

**Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Minutes**

**A. Board of Education annual district meeting - May 6, 2019**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education annual district meeting of May 6, 2019, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education annual district meeting of May 6, 2019, as presented: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed, with Mrs. Geraci abstaining.*

**B. Board of Education regular session meeting - May 15, 2019**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of May 15, 2019.*

Mr. Hicks explained that a motion had been made after the board returned from Executive Session to ratify the appointment of the principal at Brewster which was left out of the minutes. He would like the minutes amended to reflect that motion. Dr. Friedrich and Mrs. Geraci both accepted that amendment.

*In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of May 15, 2019, as amended: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Next Board Meeting - June 12, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School****Committee Reports****A. Well-Being Committee Meeting - May 28, 2019 (next meeting not yet scheduled)**

Mr. Moore reported that the committee had a well-being activity during their meeting when they made flower pots for each school. They did reach a decision on the definition of well-being that they will use and have drafted the first part of a mission statement for the committee. They are going to do an analysis to see what's going on and what gaps exist. Mr. Hicks felt that there was good conversation, but there is still a long way to go.

Dr. Taylor asked about the climate survey and Mr. Moore explained that they talked about sending out a short survey to high school students before the end of the year to get a sense of what the committee needs to think about in the fall. Dr. Veronesi explained that a comprehensive climate survey is required every two years that is scheduled for the fall, but they talked about a very brief survey for the high school and middle school assessing students' perspective on things like lockdown and fire drills. There was then discussion about the items on the comprehensive climate survey.

**B. Educational Resources Committee Meeting - May 29, 2019 (next meeting June 12, 2019)**

Mrs. Geraci reported that the whole meeting was basically meeting with ECG Group, an energy service company. They did a high-level assessment of potential energy cost savings for the district, i.e. LED lighting, boilers, etc. The next step will be a more in-depth audit and a proposal will be made following that. At this point, there is no cost or obligation to the district.

Mr. Moore explained that ECG would put up the money for any improvements that are made and the district pays them back based on the savings received on the utility bills. He also noted that they guarantee the level of savings and will pay the district if that is not achieved. Mr. Yamartino added that some of the projects would overlap and dovetail with the bonding projects that was just approved. Dr. Veronesi noted that some of the money that was allocated towards bonding could then be used for something else.

**Communications**

Mr. Moore received a note from Michelle Murphy about the field house and from Laura Francis with some suggestions on uses for Korn School.

**Administrators' Year-End Presentation**

Mrs. DiMaggio began by explaining that this evening's presentation is to provide the board and the community with a culminating review of the district's strategic coherence plan. The presentation is an overview of the three pillars, student achievement, engagement and well-being.

This year, the district worked on increasing data literacy and she reviewed the strategies that went along with that. The goal was to look at the data and improve instruction. The district implemented the Data Dashboard to track and analyze all of the data. The assessment calendar was reviewed and revised. Elementary report cards were also revised, due to the new curriculum and standards. These new report cards will be implemented in the fall.

The iReady diagnostic tool was also implemented this year for both reading and math. A book study group was implemented to look at grading practices across the district. Professional learning was provided that aligned to the district's goals and the curriculum evening was expanded. Instructional rounds were also expanded into Memorial and will go into the elementary schools next year. Schedules were revised to provide for more instructional time and curriculum writing continues as well. The summer school program in both math and reading was developed this year for students in the general education population who are in grades one through four.

Mr. Rossignol reported that the preschool program has partnered with Mary Stone, an ACES early childhood expert, to enhance practices and curriculum. Ms. Stone is helping the district to look at the State's early learning development standards to get students ready for the Common Core curriculum in kindergarten. The early learning standards include communication, physical development and social-emotional development as well. Mr. Rossignol feels that the district has made great progression in social-emotional development in all grades. The Second Step curriculum has been implemented in the preschool program and elementary school grades as well.

Mr. Rossignol explained that they are working to identify skill deficit areas as early as possible. The district often has Birth-to-Three make referrals and it's important to look at very specific aspects of communication, physical movement, cognitive abilities, etc.

Mr. Gustafson focused in on student achievement in grades K through four, specifically on implementing Foundations, the word study program in kindergarten through second grade, and on the continuing implementation of the NGSS-aligned science curriculum. He gave a brief review of both programs. Mr. Gustafson also thanked Tom Ford for his support this year.

Mr. Ford reported that Sue Michael was instrumental in implementing the NGSS standards this year and her nature walks are a highlight at the elementary level. He reviewed some of the iReady results at the elementary level. There was improvement between the fall and winter administrations of the iReady, in both math and reading. The spring results will be presented at the Student Achievement Committee meeting in June.

Mrs. Stone shared the iReady results for fifth through eighth grade and explained that growth was realized from fall to winter as well. She reviewed how the school data teams work and described that the themes at the district data team level were similar across all schools. She also noted that the spring iReady testing results look very favorable.

Mr. Sadinsky reported that Readers' Workshop has been implemented in grades six through eight and Writing Workshop in grades five through six, which brings that model to grades six through eight. The new math curriculum was implemented in grades six through eight, along with math assessments. New NGSS bundles in grades five through seven have produced a great level of engagement. NGSS assessment is being done tomorrow for the eighth graders. Schedules have been adjusted to maximize instructional time and Strong now has 50-minute classes vs. 40 and has been remarkable. Enrichment projects were piloted this year, including the after-school robotics club. The math coaches have worked with the teachers to support the curriculum and it has been very rewarding.

Mr. Falcone reviewed that five new senior learning experiences were implemented this year. Currently, 40 STEAM courses are offered at Cuginchug, with nine in math, 12 in science, six in technology and 13 in the arts. Next year, four new classes in technology and engineering will be offered, including AP Computer Science, Intro to Engineering, Design and Build Studio and an Innovation Lab. He also reported that the district is moving forward with the global partnership with Tonji High School and plan on hosting 23 students and two teachers in the fall and sending 15 students to China.

Mrs. Melillo stated that the departments continue to use Webb's DOK (Depth of Knowledge) to develop authentic learning tasks and assessments. Mr. Falcone gave a brief overview of Webb's DOK. Data is analyzed during faculty meetings and additional support is provided to students during Learning Lab interventions and a math interventionist at the high school next year.

Mr. Falcone reviewed the data from a cohort of the junior class and reported that the overall average on the SAT was 1102. This cohort has gone up in reading and writing and math, with an overall increase of 108 points.

Mrs. Melillo reviewed the SAT scores vs. the state and national averages. The district's mean score of 1102 was 86 points higher than the state average and 134 points higher than the national average. As for benchmarks, 84 percent of the students met the reading and writing benchmark, 54 percent met the math benchmark and 53 percent met both benchmarks which is higher than the state and national average.

Mrs. Manning reviewed that the district has deliberately focused on communication this year. Communication needed to be real-time and more deliberate. A strategic visioning committee was established, newsletters were implemented and a district Instagram page was launched. The district really utilized social media and expanded tools for family and staff to communicate.

Mrs. Manning explained that the focus on well-being was based on feedback that was received from students, parents and staff. Convocation was staff forward in regard to well-being. Year one of a three-year grant with the Durham-Middlefield Local Wellness Coalition was implemented for suicide prevention in grades K through 12. Scholarships have also been awarded in this area and the district continues to partner with Central for social-emotional training. A tool kit went out this year to the staff including quick and easy strategies.

The district has also partnered with the Independent Day School to provide a proactive parenting series with four successful nights with close to 30 parents at each evening event. The School Resource Officer developed relationships with staff and students. The district is also conducting exit interviews to find out how staff feels when they are leaving. The district is focusing on proactive strategies vs. reactive strategies.

Mrs. Manning stated that there has been a specific focus on equity. The district partnered with CERC to have a very targeted training in the area of race which included the First Selectmen from both towns, focus groups were conducted with the students at the high school and a commitment has been made to Middletown Public Schools to create an equity team collaboration with both districts next year. Students were awarded five scholarships at the State level to attend the Dismantling Racism Conference.

Mrs. DiMaggio summarized that all of the hard work done this year could not have happened without the efforts of the administrators, the teachers, the staff, the community and the support of Dr. Veronesi. She then presented focus areas for next year and highlighted a focus on rigorous and relevant performance tasks for students, particularly at the middle school and high school level. They will look at engagement and enrichment opportunities will be expanded. Restorative practices will be implemented at Strong next year which is to really restore and repair relationships. Mrs. DiMaggio thanked the Board of Education for their continued support and feedback.

Mrs. DiMaggio commented that this was an outstanding, productive year and what a great team the district has.

Mrs. Geraci thanked all of the administrators for their hard work. Her children love to come to school and she feels that that speaks about the people that are in the schools.

Dr. Friedrich noted that, as a member of the Student Achievement Committee, he has been treated to a magnified view of what was presented tonight and the breadth of change and depth of thought that has gone into it has been truly dizzying and is beyond impressive.

Mrs. Stone felt a highlight of the year at Memorial was the partnership with the Durham-Middlefield Local Wellness Coalition. She felt it was important that the students know that the teachers care. Ms. Melillo mentioned the Snack and Learn series that was held at the high school. Mr. Falcone stated that the impact of the senior learning experience has been unbelievable and the global partnership will be a very positive change for the school and the community. Mr. Sadinsky highlighted the career day and the seniors talking with the eighth graders.

Dr. Veronesi mentioned the variability that had existed in the district and how the PLC process has reduced that level. She believes that the current leadership team has made a remarkable difference.

Mr. Moore thanked the administrators and noted that the board can certainly see the strong teamwork. He was personally impressed by everything that went on this year, from music to athletics to all the other events. He noted that the students leaving the district are ready for college and beyond and that is thanks to the entire team.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adjournment**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

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

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First