

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 7:00 PM remotely.

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

Board members absent: None

Administration present: Dr. Serino, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance, Mr. Petronio, Athletic Director and Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and 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. Moore suggested moving item 12 up to item 6 on the agenda.

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

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

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education special session meeting - August 26, 2020

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2020 special session meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of the August 26, 2020 special session meeting, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried, with Mrs. Geraci abstaining.

Next Board Meeting - October 14, 2020 at 7:00 PM

New Business

A. Vote on flexibilities to Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans 2020-2021

Mrs. DiMaggio began by thanking everyone involved in the smooth opening of the school year. She felt that the first day of school was pretty much flawless. She noted the remarkable job everyone is doing in preparing students during remote learning. Mrs. DiMaggio also acknowledged the instructional

technology team and gave a shout out to all of the teachers and support staff. She also acknowledged the parents and explained that this is truly a partnership. Mrs. DiMaggio specifically thanked Dr. Serino for her leadership and support throughout the reopening.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that they have begun WIN (What I Need) Wednesdays which is a professional development program for certified and non-certified staff.

Mrs. DiMaggio reported that the Commissioner of Education has released a one-time flexibilities within the guidelines for the 2017 Educator Evaluation and General Statutes Section 151.b. She had forwarded those documents to the board. This is for the 2020-2021 school year only and needs to be approved by PDEC and the Board of Education. PDEC has approved the draft. The main difference is that there will be no summative ratings this year for teachers or administrators, however evaluations will still be done. They will focus more on formative evaluations and will do them informally. Reviews of practice will still be done and student learning outcomes will be focused on social and emotional learning, agreed-upon academic goals and student engagement. For administrators, the superintendent will still do site visits but the focus will be on the reopening of schools, supporting the health, safety, social and emotional well-being of staff and students, supporting remote and distance teaching and ensuring equity. Mrs. DiMaggio reminded everyone that there is no standardized data this year.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Booth, to approve the teacher and administrator evaluation plans, as submitted.

Mr. Roraback asked if the teachers will have advance notice of the informal evaluations and Mrs. DiMaggio stated that it will be both noticed and also done as walk-ins.

In favor of approving the teacher and administrator evaluation plans, as submitted: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2020-2021 Committee Assignments

Mr. Moore announced two new student members of the Well-Being Committee, Nora O'Connell and Gage Rovelli who were recommended by both Mr. Falcone and Mrs. Melillo. He also asked if anyone on the board wanted to change their committee assignments.

Mrs. Booth asked what time the Student Achievement meetings will be and Dr. Serino explained that the next meeting is scheduled for 9/23/20 at 4:00 PM, but if the meetings are still remote she feels the time could be moved. Mrs. Booth stated that she will have to call in to meetings unless they are held after 5:30, 6:00. Dr. Serino felt that there would be no need for a Policy meeting on 9/23/20, so Student Achievement could be moved to 6:00 PM.

Dr. Serino also mentioned that they just received Addendum 12 which talks about specifics of the hybrid model, so the Student Achievement meeting will be at least an hour. It was agreed to start at 5:30 PM and Mrs. Booth will call in.

C. Finance Committee Appointments

Mr. Moore explained that both David Booth and Nima Patel have asked to resign from this committee and Phil Augur has agreed to stay on if he remains as chair. Mr. Moore felt it would be more appropriate

to have a Board member as chair and Mrs. Geraci has agreed to do that. Mr. Moore asked the Board members to submit names of anyone who may be interested and thanked Mr. Booth and Mrs. Patel for all of their help.

Planning and Response Team Update

It was agreed to postpone this update until the next meeting.

Athletics Update

Dr. Serino had forwarded an update from the CIAC and explained that DPH has stated that they were unlikely to support any higher-risk activities in the fall unless there were modifications made. They also recommended that CIAC consult with their Sports Medicine Committee before implementing significant changes to how high school sports are played. CIAC believes that volleyball players can wear masks during practices and potentially during games to mitigate the risk that was expressed by DPH and DPH has not indicated any disagreement with that.

CIAC is now in alignment with DPH's recommendation about football, stating that they cannot move forward with a full contact season as it would place superintendents and Boards of Education in the impossible position of acting against a state agency (DPH). CIAC will now work with athletic directors and football coaches to provide players with the best low- to moderate-risk experiences possible. This will be basic conditioning.

Dr. Serino reported that the district's sports teams began practices on Saturday, September 5th or Tuesday, September 8th. The teams are following guidelines, with cohorts of 10 for the duration of the preseason period which ends on September 20th. Practices are limited to 60 minutes and social distancing has been strongly supported. Full team practices and contact drills will not begin until supported by DPH. Attendance is expected at practices and equipment is being cleaned after each cohort has concluded. There is presently no timeline to distribute equipment (helmets and pads).

Dr. Serino then shared the slide show that Mr. Petronio had sent out to all student athletes and parents with all fall sports information. Dr. Serino feels very confident that the athletic director, coaches and students are aware of the protocols.

Mrs. Petrella asked if schools have to follow what the CIAC says or if they have a choice. Dr. Serino explained that schools do have a choice and noted that Middletown just voted to discontinue football. Mrs. Petrella also explained that there had been a rally at the state legislature held today in support of football. Mrs. Petrella would have hoped that all schools would either play or not play.

Mr. Moore reviewed that the Board's resolution is consistent with what is happening with DPH and the CIAC.

Committee Reports

A. Policy Committee Meeting - September 9, 2020

1. First read and possible vote on Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Response Policy and Reporting

Mr. Hicks thought that the board has already had a first read on this policy and hoped that they could vote tonight.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to adopt the Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Response Policy and Reporting.

In favor of adopting the Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Response Policy and Reporting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Vote to adopt policy on Use of Face Coverings in School

Mr. Hicks reviewed that the Policy Committee met tonight and reviewed this policy from Shipman and Goodwin. The committee was in favor of adopting the optional piece about gaiters and bandanas. They want to have this portion of the policy go into effect two weeks from today, on September 23, 2020. Shipman and Goodwin also offered a second option and the committee endorsed that as well. Mr. Hicks encouraged the board to vote on this policy tonight so that it is in place quickly.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, to adopt the Use of Face Coverings in School Policy with the two options that were listed and including the date for the first option.

Mrs. Petrella wanted to confirm that the options are, in fact, part of the policy and Mr. Hicks confirmed that.

In favor of adopting the Use of Face Coverings in School Policy with the two options that were listed and including the date for the first option: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hicks explained that there is a regulation attached to the policy and the board would not typically vote on that. It is up to the Superintendent as the CEO of the district to enforce the policy. The Policy committee did ask that the board endorse the regulation that was presented.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, to endorse the attached regulation of the Use of Face Coverings in School Policy as presented by Shipman and Goodwin.

Mr. Yamartino commented that the regulation specifically stipulates that masks will be worn, as per the direction of the local health official, during athletics. The local health official is following DPH guidelines.

In favor of endorsing the attached regulation of the Use of Face Coverings in School Policy as presented with Shipman and Goodwin: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Playground Committee Update

Mrs. Booth has received nothing but positive feedback from the kids at Lyman about their new playground. Mrs. Neubig explained that purchase orders have been submitted for both Memorial

playground equipment and courts. They also shared a picture of the playground equipment at John Lyman. Mr. Moore thanked Mr. Yamartino, Mrs. Booth and the entire committee.

Communications

Mr. Moore included all of the communication he received after the last meeting in the minutes from August 26, 2020. He has also received a note from Kristen Prout about the imbalance in some of the cohorts. Others have asked if the board will move to live meetings in the near future and Mr. Moore explained that it is very difficult to have in-person and remote meetings simultaneously and Mr. Pietrasko is working on that. They also do not want to have a lot of extra people in the school buildings.

Mr. Hicks gave a compliment to Dr. Serino and her team for the opening day video.

Mrs. Petrella reported that her grandchildren were both very excited to be back in school.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Serino shared remarks that she received from the staff today about the first four days of school. She commented that the staff have the ability to see the good in all things and that is a credit to the district.

Dr. Serino then shared her reopening update, including pictures of lunch tables and classrooms. She also reviewed Addendum 9 regarding contract tracing and included how to respond to potential scenarios. Students and staff who have been determined to be in close contact (within six feet or 15 minutes or more with or without a mask) with a case will be excluded from school for 14 days. She explained that a case in a classroom would result in the entire class being quarantined for 14 days. There are other examples of community outbreaks and entire cohort outbreaks.

Addendum 10 discusses school discipline, particularly not disproportionately suspending or expelling students who may have a difficult time adhering to some of the new regulations and to pay close attention to the social-emotional impact of all of this.

Addendum 11 gives a comprehensive overview of the use of masks and face coverings. Dr. Serino believes that the district is doing a great job in terms of wearing masks and the next real focus area will be to make sure that masks fit properly. Addendum 11 does talk about all of the different types of masks and includes a chart with recommendations about the various types of masks. They indicate the effectiveness of neck gaiters and bandanas can be compromised because of the thin material and the board voted tonight not to allow those. Dr. Serino noted that there had been a provision for staff to teach from behind a Plexiglas barrier without a mask on, but that has since been withdrawn and teachers must wear masks at all times except for certain instances where their mouth must be seen as part of an instructional strategy.

Addendum 12 talks about remote learning and Dr. Serino will review it further in the Student Achievement Committee meeting.

Dr. Serino explained that when they created the cohorts, they were not sure how many parents would send their children to school. She explained that the cohorts at Brewster are pretty equally split. At Brewster, cohort A has 89 students, cohort B has 81 students and cohort C has 34 students. At Lyman, cohorts are also pretty closely split with a little bigger difference of cohort A with 93 students, cohort B with 78 students and cohort C with 27 students. At Memorial, cohort A has 111 students, cohort B has 93 students and cohort C has 26 students.

Dr. Serino reviewed that they had looked at the alphabet in trying to determine the cohorts and some students who require special education attend school four days and they are transitioning other students to a four-day week as well. There is a bigger imbalance at the middle and high schools and they will continue to look at that. Dr. Serino added that some parents decided to either send their students to school or have them learn at home and made that decision the day before school started. If they begin to look at transitioning into more in-person learning in the elementary schools, they will look at having some voluntary shifts in the cohorts to even them out.

Dr. Serino also reported that there have been fewer than five instances of either a staff member or student who needed to be quarantined per the COVID protocols, but no identified cases. She also reported that there are fewer than five students who have requested a mask exemption.

Dr. Serino also stated that they just received Addendum 13 today with guidance and considerations for school nutrition programs. She will send all of the addendums to the board members as well as the cohort information. Mrs. Booth asked about the numbers at the middle school and high school and Dr. Serino explained that, at Strong, cohort A has 219 students and cohort B has 127 students. At the high school, cohort A has 258 students and cohort B has 129 students. Dr. Serino did not have the finalized cohort C information at the moment.

Director of Finance's Report

Mrs. Neubig reported that MTA has not had much activity and is 5 percent expended, with no revenue received as of yet. The general fund is at 12 percent expended and 17 percent revenue received. The first teachers' payroll was issued in August as well as the HSA deposits for the teaching staff.

The blinds have Brewster have been done as well as duct cleaning and HVAC repairs. Yearly cleanings and inspections were done over the summer as well as tree trimming and paving repairs.

The high school basketball and tennis courts were resurfaced over the summer and insurance reimbursement was received for the fire panel damage and tree damage.

Bus loads have been small, with some buses operating with just one student and others as high as 24 students. Bus monitors are on buses with 12 students and above. On Friday, Dattco will provide the actual ridership numbers and they will look at adjusting the routes. Buses have also been running a little early because they have fewer stops.

Mrs. Neubig also reported that she received a letter from Dattco asking to be paid for the contract in whole. Right now, the contract specifies that they only get paid for days that they actually provide service. She was not sure if there will be an executive order issued about this. The district is paying for Wednesday service throughout the month of September but they will discuss that for October.

Total COVID PPE expenditures from March 16th to date are \$167,000, with \$67,000 of that in the 2019-2020 school year. Tents have been installed at four of the five schools. The State has allotted \$150,000 to the district for PPE, so most of that will be reimbursed. Additional COVID expenses include \$51,000 for curriculum for distance learning, \$5,000 for additional graduation expenses and \$42,000 for technology. Of that \$98,000, \$43,000 will be reimbursed through the CARES Act and the remaining can be billed to FEMA.

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that the state has also issued \$160 million more to school districts and it is being utilized for cleaning and safety personnel, sanitizers and custodial overtime, bus monitors and additional transportation runs.

On August 31st, the USDA and the State of Connecticut extended the waiver to serve free meals to all students. This waiver extends until December 31, 2020 or until funding runs out. For each breakfast served, the district receives \$1.89 and \$3.51 for each lunch served. They are hopeful that they won't experience any further losses in food service. She asked the board if they would like to continue that until December 31st, regardless of in-person, hybrid or full-distance learning. Mrs. Neubig does anticipate that more students would take advantage of the program if they are in school. There was an unanticipated loss in food service of \$134,000 for the year ending June 30, 2020 and an additional \$2,000 loss when the waiver was extended for July and August.

Mrs. Neubig also asked the board for direction on how to handle those losses and felt that the food service cannot shoulder that large of a burden on its own. With FEMA reimbursement, the amount would go down to about \$36,000. Again, she does not expect a significant loss if the district does extend the waiver.

Mr. Moore felt that the board should cover the loss and keep food service until the funding runs out or December 31st. Dr. Friedrich and Mr. Yamartino agreed on both issues.

Mrs. Neubig also reviewed that the year-end surplus was \$106,000 higher than had been anticipated and that would still be \$70,000 more than anticipated after absorbing the food service loss. She suggested that the board appropriate that for potential salaries for the learning loss due to COVID.

Mr. Moore also acknowledged that Tyler Gerry has been voluntarily power-washing the bleachers. He also thanked Mrs. Neubig for all of her efforts.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

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

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

Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First

Public Comment Received Via Email**From:** Kristen Prout <>**Date:** September 8, 2020 at 9:32:36 AM EDT**To:** "kserino@rsd13.org" <kserino@rsd13.org>, "rmoore@rsd13.org" <rmoore@rsd13.org>, Norm Hicks <nhicks@rsd13.org>, "cgeraci@rsd13.org" <cgeraci@rsd13.org>, "mbooth@rsd13.org" <mbooth@rsd13.org>, "mcaramanello@rsd13.org" <mcaramanello@rsd13.org>, "vfriedrich@rsd13.org" <vfriedrich@rsd13.org>, "lpetrella@rsd13.org" <lpetrella@rsd13.org>, "jroraback@rsd13.org" <jroraback@rsd13.org>, "ataylor@rsd13.org" <ataylor@rsd13.org>, "ryamartino@rsd13.org" <ryamartino@rsd13.org>**Subject:** Cohort distribution

Dear Board,

Thank you for your hard work and for a pleasant opening to the school year.

I am writing regarding my concern with the Cohort distribution of students. I wanted to make you aware of the disproportionate number of students in Cohort A vs Cohort B for both of my children. My daughter's fourth grade class has only 6 students. She is one of two girls. My son's senior English class had only two students on the first day. His P.E. class had three. While this may be great for student to teacher ratios, it does not provide much in the way of socialization or collaboration; two things we were hoping for with in person learning. In reviewing the class lists on google classroom, I can see that in my son's high school classes, the classes average 70% in Cohort A and 30% in Cohort B. My daughter's Cohort A equivalent has 13 students vs her Cohort B of 6.

While this is ok for what I hope is a couple of weeks, I am concerned with what will happen if this Hybrid learning continues into or throughout the school year. It seems that the goal of reducing class sizes for health and safety reasons is not being fully realized in Cohort A because there are so many more students than there need to be. I would think that the risk of spread could be further mitigated with more evenly distributed classes.

While I understand this is not a pressing issue and my situation may be unique, I wanted to bring it to the board's attention. I feel that a review of the class lists prior to deciding to split the classes into 2 Cohorts could have shown that they would not be evenly distributed with an A-M and N-Z split. This would have allowed for a modification before parents were told which days their child would attend. I would imagine most parents would not welcome a change at this point.

If you could let me know if my children's experience is an anomaly and the rest of the grades are evenly distributed, I would appreciate it.

Thank you,

Kristen Prout

Durham