

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board members present: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone.

Board members absent: None

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance, Mr. Brough, Human Resource Specialist, Mr. Pietrasko, Director of Infrastructure and Security Technology, Mrs. Quarato, Learner-Centered Specialist and Mrs. Siegel, Learner-Centered Specialist

Mrs. Petrella called the work session and meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, to amend the agenda by removing items 11A, 1g and 1o, because of concerns over funding of programs from outside agencies.

Mr. Moore explained that several groups have asked for the board to consider the administrative regulations regarding events such as Project Graduation and Community Round-Up and they will discuss it at the next Policy meeting. Mrs. Dahlheimer did not feel that any changes from Shipman and Goodwin affect any current fund-raising activities. Dr. Schuch explained that they just heard these concerns and are just asking for a little more time since Policy meets next week. Mrs. Dahlheimer stated that the policies could just be moved to the 5000 section and addressed with that section.

In favor of removing items 11A 1g and 1o from the agenda: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Mrs. Dahlheimer then made a motion, seconded by Dr. Darcy, to table item 11A 2, first reads of the 2000 series, until next meeting.

In favor of tabling item 11A 2 from the agenda: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Mrs. Petrella reminded everyone to speak loudly and clearly.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Betty, to approve the agenda, as amended.

In favor of approving the agenda, as amended: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Anticipated Executive Session**A. Review an Attorney-Client Privileged Communication Regarding Memorial School**

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stone, to enter into executive session to review an attorney-client privileged communication regarding Memorial School and to invite Dr. Schuch and Mrs. Neubig to be present.

In favor of entering into executive session to review an attorney-client privileged communication regarding Memorial School and inviting Dr. Schuch and Mrs. Neubig to be present: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Work Session**A. Silver Petrucelli Presentation - Memorial School Project**

Mrs. Petrella reviewed that the board has looked at a variety of ways of consolidating schools due to declining enrollments using options that make the best educational experience for the students. This has been going on since 2016, but the process was stopped because of COVID. The most recent decision that the board made was the least expensive alternative and was better than the existing grade configuration, however it wasn't the best educational decision. That reconfiguration included closing a school, but it was voted down by the community. Mrs. Petrella felt that the proposed reconfiguration is the best educational configuration and provides for consolidation of grades K-5 and equal school time attendance in both communities, while providing the option to possibly close two schools. This option does come with a higher price tag which is why it had not been chosen in the past. Tonight's presentation is to provide details on the project, including costs, and will not be an approval by the board.

Michelle Miller, an architect from Silver Petrucelli, and Andrew Woodward, from Benesch Civil Engineering were present at the meeting.

Andrew Woodward began by showing an aerial photograph of the existing site, including the tennis court area. He pointed out the location of the septic system and wells as well as the church lot. Michelle Miller went on to review the existing layout of Memorial School, explaining that the building is 48,000 net square feet (the inside of the building). Some of the existing classrooms are a little small. The enrollment projections were updated in September, 2022, including 720 students in K-5.

Looking at the school construction grant program, Ms. Miller explained that a large renovation project like this would be on the state's priority list and needs to be applied for by June 30th, with ed specs, resolutions and authorized funding for the district's share of the project. A reimbursement rate of 52.14 percent would be expected for this type of project, but that would be downgraded to 42.14 percent for new construction. The starting point of this whole process is defining the ed specs. They have a chart to compute the size of the building, based on the number of students and grade levels. The state also offers a benefit for renovation of schools built before 1959, which a lot of Memorial is. The calculations show that the district can add on approximately 48,833 net square feet.

Silver Petrucelli has met with educators over the past few months and determined how many classrooms will be needed based on maximum classroom sizes. Ms. Miller pointed out that the building will go from 233 students to 720, so space needs to increase. The existing gym is a little small as well. They are also looking at two cafeterias. Administration and infrastructure were also reviewed. Based on their calculations, the school should be 112,476 square feet which is over the space standards meaning that the reimbursement rate would be degraded down to 44.58 percent. Silver Petrucelli is not recommending that be done in order to maximize reimbursement.

Andrew Woodward then reviewed the proposed site plan. Two of the big items were a separate bus entrance and a separate parent drop-off area as well as keeping the newly-renovated tennis and pickle ball courts. They are proposing a bus loop on the church property as well as employee parking. In the existing parking lot, there will be one-way traffic with a loop on the outside. There will be lawn space, play structures, seating, blacktop area and basketball courts. They maintained the location of the soccer fields and moved the baseball/softball fields to the south, creating two smaller soccer fields for the students. They have maintained pathways from every classroom door as well as using some of the woodlands for sensory paths.

Mr. Roraback asked if there will still be access to Wadsworth Falls State Park and Mr. Woodward was unaware of that, but it could be a possibility.

A greenhouse and garden area are proposed between the two buildings, with a large courtyard off the media area. A fenced-in sensory play area and sandbox is proposed for outside of the special ed area.

Michelle Miller went on to review the proposed floor plan. The concept for the K and 1 wing was to include bathrooms within each classroom. They also extended the two existing wings to accommodate 2 and 3 in one and 4 and 5 in the other. There is a special ed classroom/resource room at the end of each wing. Work rooms and storage areas have been added as well.

They are proposing two administration areas as well as turning the media center into a special ed area. Further down the corridor will be the existing cafeteria and they are proposing an enlarged kitchen and a second cafeteria. They eliminated the stage in the gym as it is not ADA compliant and they are proposing a lower stage that will be connected to the band room. Band and music will also have shared practice rooms and storage areas. The learning commons is central space and art will be in its existing location, with another across the hall. Ms. Miller summarized that special ed is sprinkled throughout the school.

Andrew Woodward then went on to review site costs. If the student population is over 681 students, a DEEP septic system is required which is an 18-month permitting process with a \$200,000 design fee at a cost of roughly \$1.5 million. If it is possible to keep the student population under 680, there would be savings. As far as the wells, they will need to be inspected to determine their capacity and a \$250,000 contingency is included for new wells. Mrs. Petrella asked if the existing system is taken into account and Mr. Woodward did not believe so. Mrs. Petrella asked if additional fees could be added due to DEEP requirements and Mr. Woodward explained that they are included in the proposed numbers.

Dr. Darcy asked if these numbers include acquiring the church property and Ms. Miller explained that will be in the next slide.

Andrew Woodward went on to review costs of parking lots, curbing, sidewalks, entryways and play areas. Mrs. Petrella asked if there were any wetlands on the church property and Mr. Woodward stated that there are not. They are proposing bicycle racks, benches, waste receptacles, signage, a greenhouse and garden beds, basketball hoops, drinking fountains and a flagpole.

Michelle Miller then went on to summarize the costs, beginning with demolition. They have included an abatement allowance as well which may be a little high. Looking at gross square feet of 49,000, it will be a renovate-as-new project at \$400/square foot, bringing that part of the project to just under \$20 million. The new additions total 56,000 square feet at \$550/square foot, with a total of \$30.8 million. They did include an allowance for the property purchase at \$200,000 which is just a placeholder at this point. Mrs. Petrella asked if they had looked at zoning of the property and Ms. Miller was not sure. They added the site development base number of \$4.6 million and included a design and estimating contingency of 10 percent. This brings the subtotal for hard construction numbers at just over \$61 million.

Ms. Miller went on to explain that soft costs are then added, typically at 25 percent. They recommended a 10 percent owner's contingency, materials and testing fees, environmental and permit fees, borings, design fees which are typically around 7 percent, construction management fees at 3 percent, owner's rep fees at 2 percent, anticipated furniture, fixtures and equipment at \$1.8 million and escalation costs of 6 percent per year or \$7.3 million over the two years.

The total project is estimated \$83,759,987 or \$798/square foot. Reimbursement of 52.14 percent, or \$43.6 million, would leave the district's share at just over \$40 million.

Mr. Mennone asked if any security measures were included and Ms. Miller stated that that is included in the square foot number. Cameras would also be included. Dr. Darcy summarized that this is just conceptual and what is required for application for reimbursement, but not necessarily a specific design. Dr. Schuch added that this is not the design and is just a potential design. If the district decides to move forward, architects will bid on the project and there will be competing designs. Ms. Miller stated that architects will have to stick to the proposed numbers. Mrs. Neubig reviewed that they could review these proposed numbers before they are submitted to the state, however once that number is submitted, other architects will need to stay with them. Michelle Miller then reviewed the priority list of projects from the state and noted that architects need to stay within the projected numbers.

Mrs. Petrella asked if two cafeterias were necessary and Ms. Miller explained that the cafeterias are based on the size of the population and number of lunch waves. Dr. Darcy added that the learning commons would be the media center, meeting space as well as tutoring and intervention space.

If the district chooses to move forward, the next steps would include the ed specs by June 30th. Approvals, local funding and resolutions need to be done by that date as well. The district then can go out to hire an architect and design team. Silver Petrucelli does recommend hiring a construction manager, with an optional owner's rep.

Mr. Moore asked if the reimbursement percentage changes because there are other schools available and Ms. Miller stated that it would not because the population would be moved to Memorial. The state would no longer make any reimbursement on the other schools that are no longer being used.

Mrs. Neubig then began reading questions that had been received. If the square footage of the building at 105,000 appropriate to accommodate the enrollment and meet standards for classroom size and support space or can it be reduced. The questioner commented that the cost goes down by \$8 million for every 10,000 square feet the building is reduced. Ms. Miller explained that the net square footage of the building is in line with space standards. The proposed concept is 96,414 net square feet, with the allowable being 97,030. The 105,000 is gross square feet, which includes exterior walls. The cost per square foot is typical at this stage in design.

What kind of heating/cooling plant did you envision? The district just spent over \$3 million on new HVAC and will that go to waste? Ms. Miller explained that nothing will be wasted. She did go directly to the mechanical engineer and the system should be allowed to remain as long as OSCG&R approves it. The existing boiler plant has approximately 100 percent redundant capacity when compared to the existing heating load. They may also be able to add sections to the existing boilers. The new additions and some of the renovated areas will require new equipment and dedicated outside air systems will likely be used. Heat pump technology will also be incorporated. Parallel pipe runs can also be installed.

Will the proposed building be fully sprinkled? Ms. Miller explained that the building code does require it for any new and renovate-as-new educational buildings.

What would be the bare minimum number of classrooms and support spaces that would have to be added to accommodate the students from Lyman and Brewster? How much area would this require without expansion or alteration of core spaces? Ms. Miller explained that, per enrollment projects and the class size policy, 36 classrooms are required. The remainder of the core spaces are typically determined by the educational programs offered and scheduling.

Silver Petrucelli stated that the owner's rep is optional, but they did not note the construction manager as optional. The district ran a much larger building project that encompassed four of six schools 20 years ago with a clerk of the works. Why would they want a CM? Ms. Miller explained that they highly recommend a CM because a lot has changed in 20 years and most general contractors cannot bond a project of this scale. The CM comes in early and provides better control over the whole process, ensuring that the project is completed on time and in budget. Mrs. Neubig added that the Building Committee recommended that as well.

The space connotation worksheet appears to be for a smaller project. Ms. Miller explained that this option does align with the space worksheet. The worksheet looks at net square feet which is the inside of the building and the gross square footage is used for estimating.

If the main entrance remains in its current location, is the district better off not purchasing the property from St. Coleman's and just lease the space? Aside from the cost of the land, site development will be expensive. Ms. Miller stated that there is an issue on-site with only a single point of access. The population of staff, students, buses and parent drop-offs will be drastically increased and the additional space will improve safety. Without the church property, the site would still have only one point of access and separating buses and vehicles would be a major challenge.

Why are we proposing to renovate-as-new, ripping out building systems that were installed only 27 years ago? There hasn't been much, if any, change in these systems. Ms. Miller stated that they recommend renovate-as-new as the entire building can be modernized and reimbursement maximized. Windows,

furniture, accessibility and other items will need replacement. Certain items will not need to be removed as long as they can certify that it will last another 20 years. When towns do not renovate-as-new, much of the building remains untouched and people will not want to do renovations later.

Mrs. Petrella asked for Ms. Miller's answers to be included in the Google document. She thanked both Ms. Miller and Mr. Woodward for their presentation. Mrs. Petrella felt that the board might want to schedule a special meeting to discuss the project. It was agreed to schedule a joint meeting with the Building committee on March 15th.

Presentations and Recognitions

A. CRHS Reporters - Hayden Gonzales and Christine Waterman

Hayden Gonzales reported athletics are looking forward to the spring season, with Saturday, March 18th being the first official day for practices. There is a new collaborative girls' lacrosse team with Middletown High School and a club boys' rugby team that will play interscholastically with home games being held at Peckham Park. The girls' basketball team is still competing in the post-season. The boys' basketball team lost in the first rounds of states. Anthony DeFilio was recently named as the new head coach of the football team. The winter sports banquet will be held on Wednesday, March 15th. Benchwarmers have announced four different scholarships for graduating seniors, including an Athlete of the Year award and the new Judy Camp Memorial Award which will be for an athlete pursuing education as their field of study.

Hayden also reported that Matilda will be performed on March 30th, 31st and April 1st, with over 70 students from Strong and Cuginchaug involved. Pep Band seniors were honored at the Boys' Senior Night in February and the Pep Band will play at the unified sports game on Monday. The district band concert was held last week, with over 250 students.

Christine Waterman reported that students are continuing to enjoy monthly visits with therapy dogs. On February 22nd, 11 students returned from a trip to Costa Rica. On March 1st, 12 members of DECA joined 800 high school students at the career development conference. Three students were top-place finishers and will advance to the international competition in Florida next month. Mr. Donecker was recognized for 10 years of service as the DECA advisor. Over 20 students are preparing for the robotics competition that runs Friday through Sunday in Waterbury. Mr. Cuginchaug will be held next week. Juniors take the SATs on March 22nd and the sophomore class has their semi-formal on March 24th. Christine added that Cuginchaug High School is proud to announce that the 2023 valedictorian is Jenna DePonte and Catherine Taylor is the salutatorian.

Public Comment - at the beginning of the meeting, public comment should refer to items on the agenda

A. In-person public comment

The two current football captains thanked Mrs. Stone and Mr. Petronio for their efforts in the hiring process of the new football coach. They appreciated the fact that they were able to provide input in the process and be part of the interview panel. Other players also thanked them for taking their comments into consideration and they are all happy to have Coach D as the new head coach. Molly Clark, president

of the Coginchaug Football Club, was also an active participant on the hiring committee. The parents are thrilled to have Anthony DeFilio as the new head coach and also thanked Mr. Petronio and Mrs. Stone. The selection of Coach D brings fun back to the program and also sends a clear message to the players that they are valued. It also brings much-needed stability to the program.

Karen Buckley, from Durham, has been an active and involved parent in the district for over 20 years. All of the groups she has participated in have worked to fund-raise and fill the void for programs that have not been included in the RSD13 budget. Ms. Buckley reviewed some of the many projects she has been involved with and noted that she has helped raise over \$100,000 for the district. In her professional life, she tracks, reads and writes legislation and policies. She has expertise in bringing in community input and also the reading of proposed policies and regulations. Ms. Buckley thanked Dr. Schuch for speaking with her today and for tabling the policies that the board did tonight. She added that it is almost impossible to access the draft policies and noted that she was actually told that she could not have access to them until they were passed by the board. That has since been rectified. Ms. Buckley also reviewed the minutes from Policy committee meetings for the last year and could not review the actual language being proposed. She felt that that was a problem and that the policies should be available for comment, either linked to the agenda or on the website. She only focused on the two policies regarding fund-raising because she felt it would be too cumbersome to request all of the policies. Ms. Buckley also noted that the district counts community service projects as fund-raisers which would mean a parent would have to sign a form to make a donation, of even a canned good or diapers, and that would basically stop community service projects. She hoped that paperwork wouldn't get in the way of community service.

B. Remote public comment

None.

Approval of Minutes**A. Board of Education Regular Meeting - February 8, 2023****B. Board of Education Regular Work Session - February 22, 2023**

Because there were no changes suggested to the minutes, they will remain as is.

Superintendent's Report (if applicable)

Dr. Schuch noted that March is Board Member Appreciation month and added how much they appreciate what the board members do. Mrs. Petrella added a special thank you to Mrs. Maloney who puts everything together for the board.

Dr. Schuch also noted that Read Across America Day was last Thursday and happened in the district's schools. He gave a special shout-out to Mrs. Mariani who did a great job organizing the day. He also gave a special thank-you to Mrs. Kosienski's kindergarten class, Mrs. Polansky's third grade class and Mrs. McKay's fifth grade class for allowing him to read to them. He felt it was very important to instill not only the ability to read, but the joy to read.

Mrs. Dahlheimer would love to see a slide show of Read Across America Day. Dr. Schuch will try to do that, but added that those photos will be featured in the upcoming District Snapshot as well.

Staff Reports**A. Director of Finance Report - Kim Neubig**

Mrs. Neubig reported that the general fund is 62 percent expended and 65 percent of budgeted revenue has been received. MTA has expended 40 percent, with 41 percent budgeted revenue received. The general fund budget for the 2022-2023 year is running very close and she does not anticipate any surplus whatsoever, most due to some unanticipated expenses and the vacancy factor of 96.5. She assured everyone that they will not go over budget, but will not have a surplus to help with future years.

Mrs. Neubig explained that the State of Connecticut is funding free lunch from March 1st through the last day of school for all students. There is legislation in the House that would extend that indefinitely, but at the expense of the local municipalities. There may be grants available for higher-need towns. Mrs. Neubig estimates that it will cost \$355,000 and asked the board to keep that in the back of their minds.

Mrs. Neubig attended a school security symposium last week. There is a security grant with the State of Connecticut that extended the deadline until April 28th and would come with a 52 percent reimbursement rate. She asked the board to let her know if she should apply for that grant.

Mrs. Neubig reported that she has heard that all projects have been identified for the HVAC grants and are awaiting the Commissioner's approval. The district put in for \$2 million, but she is not sure if they will get anything.

New Business**A. Vote to reallocate the culvert grant funds to the Pickett Lane paving project**

Mrs. Neubig explained that the culvert had been put in the \$6.9 million bonding package before they knew that a grant was available. The grant will be between \$330,000 to \$350,000 but the has not come in yet. That money will remain in the \$6.9 million bonding package and can be used to pave Pickett Lane.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to put any grant money that is returned towards the Pickett Lane paving project.

Mr. Moore asked if prices have been received for the paving and Mrs. Neubig explained that two bids came in and are within budget. They are still reviewing the bids, but it is promising.

In favor of putting any grant money that is returned towards the Pickett Lane paving project: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

B. Discussion on school choice

Both Ms. Betty and Mrs. Caramanello had to leave the meeting early and were on the phone as of this point. Ms. Betty had asked to have this item put on the agenda and she explained that both she and Mrs. Caramanello have brought this up several times. She felt that there should no longer be a difference

between the two schools. Mrs. Caramanello added that, in her experience as an employee of the district, it creates unnecessary competition between the two schools. Ms. Betty added that if there is no difference in the programming, there needs to be absolutely no difference and a decision should not need to be made about which school children go to based on program. Mrs. Caramanello didn't understand what people are even choosing if there is no difference or why a choice is even being offered. She felt that there is a negative feel of competition between two excellent schools and two excellent groups of teachers and she was shocked to hear that a choice was even available this year.

Mrs. Petrella agreed that it was certainly a conversation for the board to have, but that it wouldn't make sense to make changes this year because it's been in the works. She recommended that the discussion be continued at another meeting.

Mrs. Roy asked if the district would save transportation costs if school choice were eliminated. Mrs. Neubig felt that only one or two buses would be reduced. Mrs. Roy also asked for a list of the things going on that are different between the two schools so that they can have an honest discussion. Mr. Mennone added that if something different is going on, why isn't it being addressed? Mrs. Roy mentioned that Lyman has the opportunity for learners as early as grade 2 to participate and lead their parent-teacher conference, but she has not heard anything about that at Brewster or Memorial.

Dr. Schuch would want to bring the administration from the two schools into this conversation. He did add that, even with the same curriculum and same programming, no two schools are identical nor would we want them to be. He acknowledged that choice of two different programs can create some tension. Dr. Schuch would also want to talk about this when they make a decision on configuration changes. He related that any time a choice is taken way, it upsets a lot of people. Dr. Schuch felt that a preK-2 school and a K-4 school are different.

Mrs. Caramanello added that parents have made decisions based on a reconfiguration that was going to be happening. Other than grade levels which are glaringly not the same, what are parents basing their decisions on and what presentations are being given? Dr. Schuch added that Mr. Ford and Mrs. Murray have worked to make things consistent, but he didn't think they asked people why they are making the decisions they are. He felt that the biggest issue is when they can tell people what the schools will look like. Mr. Ford has felt that fewer people choose Lyman for kindergarten ever since it was announced that it may be closing and has also felt that there is a lot of apathy and people wondering if anything is ever going to change. Mrs. Caramanello agreed and acknowledged that parents are feeling that.

Mrs. Petrella asked for the conversation to continue at another meeting and added that the Communication committee will look at these issues as well. Ms. Betty stated that only Brewster houses the special needs preK program and those parents are not given a choice to go to Lyman and enjoy four years in one location. Mrs. Petrella added that no one can say the board hasn't been trying with the reconfiguration and the bottom line is that it is the community's decision to make. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that there were many questions about this and would like more information. Dr. Schuch felt that the more time they can give people, the better; though he would love to have the configuration set first.

Mr. Roraback reviewed that, back in the day, where the children went was truly based on the best use of the building and the kids switched back and forth between schools and it was okay.

C. Discussion on food in schools

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that no food in the schools, especially around celebrations, seems to be tied to healthy choices. Dr. Schuch noted that the Wellness policy gives discretion to each principal about how much or how little will be allowed. During COVID, it just went away and hasn't really come back. He believes that this was an issue, even before COVID, and different schools and different districts have handled it differently. He felt that there are a lot of positives for having food in schools but there are allergy issues, childhood obesity issues and even teacher time. He did hope to give the schools direction if the board isn't happy with what is happening currently.

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that there should be a policy to allow food in the classrooms. If allergies are an issue, the kids should be educated about them. Mrs. Petrella felt that this should be discussed at the Policy committee and Mrs. Dahlheimer felt there was confusion about whether this was a board policy or a building policy. Dr. Schuch added that there is still snack time in the classroom, but the outside food has been limited. Mrs. Stone stated that there is no food brought in for celebrations at the high school and also noted the inequity between classrooms at the elementary level, based on parent involvement. Dr. Darcy added that they needed to think about the fact that they can celebrate without food and they should learn how to do that.

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that this wasn't just about celebrations, but also to allow teachers to have the kids bring in items for projects. She would like the Policy committee to take a look at that. Ms. Betty noted that she was the room mom in kindergarten and they brought in outside food for celebrations and she understood that policy 5135 was more about nutrition and healthy choices. She did not feel it was fair to say that children should not be allowed to bring in outside food for celebrations when PTOs provide outside food for celebrations for the teachers.

The board took a break at this point.

Committee Reports**A. Policy Committee Meeting - February 13, 2023**

- 1. Second read and vote to approve:**
 - a. Equity 0523**
 - b. Advertising, Promotion and Commercial Activities 1320**
 - c. Automatic External Defibrillators - AEDs 1102**
 - d. Concept and Roles in Community Relations 1000**
 - e. Distribution of Material by Students 1140**
 - f. Election Activities and Campaign Literature 1326**
 - g. Fundraising Activities 1325**
 - h. Gifts to School Personnel and Board of Education Members 1313**
 - i. Law Enforcement Agencies 1411**
 - j. Non-Discrimination (Community) 1118**
 - k. Prohibition Against Smoking 1331**
 - l. Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings 1120**
 - m. Relations Between Recognized Organizations and the Schools 1500**
 - n. School-Community Associations 1210**

- o. Soliciting Funds from and by Students 1324**
- p. Use of Regional District 13 Properties 1330**
- q. Visits to the Schools 1250**

Mr. Moore explained that the committee has taken no action on the Equity policy as of yet and will probably be moved to the 6000 series (possibly 6523). Mrs. Dahlheimer reminded everyone that they are not going to vote on old item g, Fund-raising Activities 1352, and old item o, Soliciting Funds from and by Students 1324.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, to approve the policies under agenda item 11A 1, a-f, h-n and p-q.

In favor of approving the policies under agenda item 11A 1, a-f, h-n and p-q: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Mr. Moore would like to get the drafts of all policies online for the public.

B. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - March 2, 2023

1. Possible vote on Literacy Program

Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that the Student Achievement meeting was a wonderful meeting with a lot of information. She asked everyone to watch the Google Meet from the meeting. With regard to the literacy program, it is glaring that it is what the teachers are asking for. They have extensively researched it and she felt that the board should honor their wishes. Mr. Roraback added that Mrs. Caramanello, as a former teacher, was certainly in favor of it and he trusts her judgment. He also liked that Guilford rolled it out slowly and that is what the district would do as well. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that they would not want to wait until June or July for the teachers to get the training needed for this program.

Mrs. Quarato explained that this is the kind of program where the teacher is really guiding the learning but gives the learners the opportunity to be a little more independent. It also allows for the teacher to work more closely in the small group setting. Mr. Roraback added that it will be great for new teachers as well. Mrs. Quarato explained that they are looking at K-5 right now. They hope to start with one module, possibly two, of EL Education.

Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to approve the EL Education Literacy Program for grades K-5.

In favor of approving the EL Education Literacy Program for grades K-5: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Mrs. Dahlheimer also reported that the Student Achievement committee reviewed iReady and SAT scores and elective offerings as well as touch on future committee meeting dates on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

C. Finance Committee Meeting - March 8, 2023

Mr. Stone reported that the Finance committee discussed the budget and wished that the per pupil cost could be reduced.

Communications

Mrs. Petrella reiterated that she sends any communications she receives out to everyone.

Mr. Moore asked about the communication from Antonio Almodovar where he didn't see a response. Mrs. Dahlheimer explained that it was a student matter and was forwarded to the administration. Mr. Moore also noted that the board hasn't really dealt with the comments from Draya Gohagon and it might be time to have discussions with students about bullying and racial issues. Mrs. Dahlheimer cautioned about discussing student matters.

Public Comment - at the end of the meeting should refer to items not on the agenda**A. In-person public comment**

Craig Bradanini, president of the Regional District 13 Education Association, reported that he has received numerous concerns from members. They understand that there have just been work sessions to gather information and make informed decisions on the proposed budget, but ask that the board speak and ask questions about specific positions and not about specific people in those positions. Many teachers have multiple certifications and who will fill certain positions is not always known. The Association also encourages the board to ask data-driven questions on a global scale. Mr. Bradanini thanked the board for their hard work and support.

B. Remote public comment

Carl Stoup, from Durham, apologized for tuning in late and not hearing the whole presentation on Memorial School, but knowing the space that is available in the district, he would like to see an efficiency study done and not build additional spaces when they are not needed. He brought up the field house/storage building of almost 4,000 sq. ft., adding that it will increase operating costs. He thanked the board members for all the work they do.

Adjournment

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

In favor of adjourning the regular meeting of the Board of Education: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Roy and Mr. Stone. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First