

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board of Education Members Present: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons.

**Board of Education Members Absent:** Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. DelVecchio, and Mr. Stone

Administration Present: Dr. Leggett, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Linda Darcy made a motion, seconded by Lucy Petrella, to approve the agenda as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the agenda as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

### **Presentation: Dr. Siegel - Update on Curriculum and Instruction**

Dr. Siegel presented a midyear update titled “Setting the Foundation: Strengthening Learning,” outlining progress and next steps across curriculum, professional learning, evaluation, assessment, instruction, and instructional technology. Dr. Siegel discussed the continued implementation of the curriculum review cycle, conducting level-setting sessions and reviewing an initial curriculum audit from ACES, establishing aligned and relevant professional learning, implementing a district-wide assessment platform (LinkIt), and strengthening instructional, multilingual learner, and technology supports. Looking ahead, the focus is on facilitating curriculum revisions, refining evaluation consistency, expanding cross-district professional learning, strengthening data-informed instruction, enhancing multilingual learner practices, and implementing improved systems for software requests and student AI programming to support high-quality teaching and learning district-wide. Dr. Siegel identified that establishing this foundation will position the district to develop a clear curriculum and instructional mission and vision in the coming year, while seamlessly integrating the upcoming strategic plan and Portrait of the Graduate. This work reflects a collaborative, district-wide effort supported by the superintendent, administrators, teachers, and support staff. Additionally, student input was included with this mid-year reflection, with students identifying what they have learned thus far this school year and what they are looking forward to in the second half of the year.

Board members thanked Dr. Siegel for the work and presentation, noting appreciation for data driven decision making and the implementation of multilingual student supports in Tier 1 instruction. Board

members also expressed interest in attending training sessions on the LinkIt platform, which Dr. Siegel would send to the Board for review.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Approval of Minutes**

#### A. Board of Education & Boards of Selectmen Meeting - December 10, 2025

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the minutes as presented.*

*Mr. Roraback requested an amendment that Middlefield second selectman Mr. O'Rourke was present at this meeting.*

*All in favor of approving the December 10, 2025 Board of Education & Boards of Selectmen Meeting Minutes with the amendment: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

#### B. Board of Education Regular Meeting - December 10, 2025

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the December 10, 2025 Board of Education Meeting Minutes as presented.*

Board Members had amendments for the December 10 meeting minutes. Mr. Roraback requested future minutes include more detailed identification of board member positions to best inform the public and to have on record. Mrs. Cowan requested clarification for when the 4-minute break occurred in the meeting, in addition to correcting the motion for the nomination of Dr. Darcy as Vice Chair. Dr. Leggett noted that the break occurred between the two tied votes for Board Chair. Mrs. Cowan requested a review of the approval and opposed votes, identifying that she believed it was a unanimous vote of approval that should be corrected. Lastly, Mrs. Cowan requested that in the Memorial Project Update, the meeting minutes reflect the amendment that the bids for abatement would go out in January and that the abatement process would begin in February.

*All in favor of approving the December 10, 2025 Board of Education Meeting Minutes as presented with amendments: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Leggett presented the Superintendent Report. The district has finalized two leadership positions within the Learning Department: Director of Teaching and Learning and Associate Director of Teaching and Learning. These positions reflect a broader scope than a traditional “curriculum director” role. Job

descriptions have been refined, leadership has reviewed them, and the Director position is expected to be posted by the end of the month, with an interview process to follow. Mrs. Cowan questioned if Board Members would be included in the interview process, and Dr. Leggett identified there would be Board Member representation on the committee.

Additional updates included upcoming work around secondary pathways through a CAPSS partnership with Miguel Cardona, ongoing student registration and course selection, and extensive community engagement through the strategic planning survey and focus groups. The district has received 256 responses to the survey, and Dr. Leggett will have held 21 focus groups by the end of January, including two upcoming student sessions. Schools are focusing on restorative practices tied to honesty this month, with an emphasis on goal setting and accountability. Dr. Leggett highlighted collaborative budget work, the need for increased student and support staff participation on committees, and upcoming budget and training meetings.

Finally, Dr. Leggett addressed a growing issue of unpaid costs from intentionally damaged Chromebooks, totaling approximately \$12,000.

Mr. Roraback questioned if Chromebooks could remain in the classroom and Mrs. Cowan reported that classrooms utilize technology carts for younger students, but sixth grade students can start bringing devices home. Dr. Darcy questioned if families were required to buy insurance and had requested a review of policy because it is not required. Mr. Konstantino inquired if a tech report could identify where vandalism is most occurring, and Mr. Simmons questioned if it was feasible to see the percentage of devices that were not insured and for the Board to purchase insurance for those devices. Mrs. Neubig would look into this. Additionally, Mrs. Cowan asked about the insurance reimbursement process, and Mrs. Neubig responded that it is reported to be working without known issues. Ultimately, while insurance and hardship waivers are available to families, the focus is on tightening processes, improving accountability, and reviewing policies related to insurance, device use, and collections, with further data analysis planned to inform next steps.

### **Chairman's Update**

Mr. Moore presented the Chairman's update. At the January 24 work session, the Board will discuss key budget-related issues affecting future planning, including insurance costs, capital needs, and the development of a five-year capital improvement plan. Significant facility needs were noted at Strong and Coginchaug Regional High School, particularly roof and infrastructure concerns, supported by a detailed life-expectancy spreadsheet. A joint Board and Building Committee meeting is scheduled for January 21 to approve Phase III construction plans before submission to the state.

Additional updates included upcoming board training focused on effective board functioning, progress on a semiannual district newsletter that will be distributed digitally and via limited print copies to reduce costs, and a forthcoming vote on accepting a donated baby grand piano for the music department. The Board was also encouraged to review a report from Durham Youth and Family Services highlighting challenges facing students in grades 7–12.

Mr. Roraback inquired if Middlefield had reached out with content to put in the Middlefield newsletter. Dr. Leggett has been contacted and is included on the calendar updates so District content can be sent.

Finally, Mr. Moore discussed the logistics for an upcoming board retreat and training on January 28th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

**Director of Finance – Mrs. Neubig**

Mrs. Neubig presented a Y-T-D budget update. As of the end of December, 44% of the district's budget has been expended, 96% has been encumbered, and 57% of projected revenue has been received. While some accounts are already trending over budget, these costs are known through encumbrances and are currently being offset by under-expended accounts. The finance office is closely monitoring the bottom line to ensure it remains within the legally approved budget.

To improve budget accuracy, all certified staff and administrators are requested by March 1 to encumber anticipated needs for the remainder of the school year, providing clear insight into the end of the year budget status. Development of the 2026–2027 budget is progressing on schedule, with detailed line-by-line reviews underway. In addition, required annual indoor air quality inspections have been completed and posted publicly on school and district websites.

Mrs. Cowan questioned what are the top line items trending over budget. Mrs. Neubig reported that current budget pressures include salaries related to the vacancy factor, outplacement tuition, and outplacement transportation and legal costs. These increases are expected and manageable at this time, with no immediate action needed, but will be closely monitored.

**Update on Memorial Project**

Angela Cahill of STV provided an update on the Memorial School project. Phase II (hazardous materials abatement and selective demolition) has been approved by the state and is currently out to bid, with bids expected soon. This will provide a clearer picture of actual project costs compared to estimates. A joint Board and Building Committee meeting is scheduled next week to approve Phase III, the largest phase involving building renovations and additions.

The design team has delivered 100% construction documents, which have undergone third-party code review and received routine, non-substantive comments that are being resolved in preparation for the Project Cost Review (PCR) on January 22. Independent and construction manager cost estimates are being reconciled to finalize a reliable project budget prior to approval.

The project schedule is being refined now that full documents are complete, with no major design changes reported beyond minor value-engineering options. Mr. Moore inquired about the process of hazmat and demolition. Ms. Cahill discussed Phase II work will prepare the existing building for renovation by safely removing asbestos and other hazardous materials and completing selective demolition. Board members inquired if the public would have access to the property during the demo. Ms. Cahill addressed that site logistics, safety, drainage, fencing, and community access during construction are being actively coordinated with local officials, first responders, and the construction manager to ensure safety and minimize disruption.

**Board Communications and Professional Development**

Mr. Moore reported that the Board received communication from Claudia White from Youth and Family Services, previously discussed. The Board received a letter from Ed Remillard regarding the tennis courts which will be addressed with the Building Committee.

**New Business****A. Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Proposed 2026-2027 District Calendar**

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to approve the 2026-2027 District Calendar as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the 2026-2027 District Calendar as presented:*

*Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

**B. Vote to Accept Merwin Funds**

The Merwin Funds have provided grant funding for the school for many projects. This is the third grant this year for the purpose of supporting bakers to acquire the equipment they need for their fudge business.

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to accept the \$1,000.00 Merwin grant.*

*All in favor of approving the \$1,000.00 Merwin grant as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

**C. Vote to Approve CRHS Field Trip - Atlanta**

Students from Coginchaug Regional High School, accompanied by teachers and a chaperone, attend this field trip through DECA and participate in the national competition, which is hosted in Atlanta this year.

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to approve the CRHS field trip to Atlanta.*

*All in favor of approving the CRHS field trip to Atlanta as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

**D. Vote to Approve Additional Day for the CRHS Field Trip - Spain & France**

The Coginchaug Regional High School field trip would have the opportunity to extend their trip in Spain and France by one day and visit Provence, without missing additional school time and without a major financial impact to the whole cost of the trip. The additional cost is estimated at \$200 per student.

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to approve the Additional Day for the CRHS field trip to Spain and France as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the Additional Day for the CRHS field trip to Spain and France as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

E. Creation of Subcommittee for Naming of Facilities (Naming Schools or School Facilities 3281)

The Board discussed establishing a Naming Committee in accordance with Policy 3281, which requires representation from both Middlefield and Durham board members, along with community representatives. Mrs. Cowan and Mr. Roraback were identified to coordinate and co-chair the committee, with additional community members, students, and school administrators to be solicited for participation. Board members emphasized policy considerations, including restrictions on naming facilities after individuals and the importance of regional and historical significance.

Timing was discussed, with consensus that the committee's work should be completed by April to support logistical needs related to the consolidation of school libraries and the broader transition into the new building. A separate subcommittee will also be needed to develop a new mascot, with student and school administrator involvement encouraged. The Board agreed that the committee should remain a manageable size, likely no more than ten members.

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to establish the creation of the Subcommittee for Naming of Facilities, with Mrs. Cowan and Mr. Roraback serving as co-chair members.*

*All in favor of approving the creation of the Subcommittee for Naming of Facilities, with Mrs. Cowan and Mr. Roraback serving as co-chair members as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

### Policy Review

1. First read a. Fundraising Activities 5325

Mrs. Cowan discussed revisions to Policy 5325, which would permit limited, regulated peer-to-peer fundraising while continuing to prohibit unrestricted fundraising platforms such as GoFundMe. The update also clarifies that parents may post about fundraising at their own discretion. The revised policy language adds a brief paragraph requiring all fundraisers to adhere to non-discrimination principles, ensure accessibility for all students, and emphasize full-group or whole-class goals rather than individual student fundraising amounts.

The policy revision will move forward to a second reading at the next meeting. The accompanying regulations received positive feedback and were supported by the Board, allowing upcoming activities such as read-a-thons and graduation fundraising to proceed under the updated framework.

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to approve the Fundraising Activities 5325 regulations presented.*

*All in favor of approving the Fundraising Activities 5325 regulations as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

2. Second read and possible vote

a. Graduation Requirements Policy 5127 - Correction

Dr. Leggett reviewed that the Graduation Requirements Policy correction allocates 0.25 credits per year of physical education and 0.25 credits per year of health education, with an additional 0.5 credit awarded for participation in one season of an athletic team. Students may earn no more than two total credits through this structure.

Dr. Darcy inquired if students could skip a year of physical education and/or health. Dr. Leggett confirmed that students are expected to complete physical education and health each year. Dr. Siegel clarified that there are quarter-credit requirements aligned by grade level (e.g., PE 9, PE 10, etc.), and that students may not skip a year and make it up later. While electives in physical education are available beyond the required quarters, the intent is consistent annual participation, with any flexibility reserved for special circumstances such as new student transitions.

Mrs. Petrella also noted that the “additional requirements” section appeared twice in the document, and one version will be removed for clarity.

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the revised Graduation Requirements Policy 5127 as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the revised Graduation Requirements Policy 5127 as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

b. School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees - Shipman - Edited

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the edited School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees - Shipman policy as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the edited School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees - Shipman policy as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

• Administrative Regulations Regarding School Volunteers - Shipman - Edited

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to approve the edited Administrative Regulations Regarding School Volunteers- Shipman policy as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the edited Administrative Regulations Regarding School Volunteers- Shipman policy as presented: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed.*

**Committee Reports****A. Building Committee & BOE Joint Meeting - December 8, 2025**

Mr. Moore presented the Building Committee report. At the December 8 joint meeting, the Building Committee convened briefly to approve the Phase II bid documents. This approval allowed the Phase II work—demolition and hazardous materials abatement—to be submitted to the state and released for bidding.

**B. Policy Committee Meeting - December 17, 2025**

Mrs. Cowan had updated the Board during the current meeting regarding the discussion of Fundraising Activities Policy 5325. There were no additional updates to report.

**C. Building Committee Meeting - December 17, 2025**

Mr. Simmons iterated that Phase II of the Memorial School project has been approved by the state and is moving forward, with bid activity underway. The committee reviewed Phase II timelines, discussed keeping buildings accessible during construction, and approved invoices. Phase I was formally closed out, with all remaining items completed under budget.

Additional discussions included potential installation of electric vehicle charging stations at Memorial as required by Middlefield Planning and Zoning, results of recent soil coring and borings, and safety considerations related to trees on the Memorial property, particularly one located in a future courtyard area. The committee also held preliminary discussions on the field house, including current use and possible long-term improvements such as team rooms, storage, training space, and concessions, with further review planned.

**Public Comment****A. In-person public comment**

Nick Faiella from the Bench Warmers presented the annual Banner Advertising Revenue Report. This year, banner ads generated about \$33,000, while \$39,000 was spent on student-athlete support, with the largest portion (\$16,500) going toward scholarships. Additional funds include \$15,000 earmarked for a capital improvement project and roughly \$10,000 pending approval, which did not close out 2025. A detailed report will be emailed to district staff for distribution. Additionally, Mr. Faiella passed out the basketball program. The program, ongoing since 1966, emphasizes community engagement and support for student activities rather than profit. The Board praised the program's quality and the visibility it gives to student-athletes.

**B. Remote public comment**

There was no public comment.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Nick Konstantino, to adjourn the meeting.*

*All in favor of adjourning the meeting: Dr. Darcy, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, and Mr. Simmons. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.*

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio