

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 6:05 p.m. in the library Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board of Education Members Present: Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Darcy (attended virtually), and Mr. Konstantino

Board of Education Members Absent: 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**

*Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to approve the agenda as presented.*

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

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Discussion of Confidential Attorney-Client Communication Concerning Indemnification Vote (proposed for executive session)**

Mr. Moore presented the attorney from Shipman and Goodwin to speak with the Board members regarding the legal implications of the proposed motion to rescind the previous vote that was made by the Board approximately 8 months ago. Since that vote, new members have been appointed to the Board, so the attorney will give legal counsel so all members are presented with appropriate information and are fully apprised of the implications of the vote and can exercise their judgement.

The board is entering an executive session to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege under §1-210 of the Bureau of Information Law, which safeguards written communications between a public agency and its attorney. The executive session statute permits private discussion whenever disclosure of confidential communications could occur. Sharing the attorney’s advice publicly would waive this privilege, potentially exposing prior discussions, so the session ensures board members can consult with legal counsel confidentially and protect sensitive information.

*Mrs. Cowan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, for the Board to enter an executive session with Dr. Leggett and legal counsel, Tom Mooney, present, for the Board to discuss and possibly take action to rescind its vote on July 16, 2025, regarding the indemnification of Lindsay Dahlheimer.*

*All in favor of the approval of the Board entering executive session with Dr. Leggett and legal counsel present for the Board to discuss and possibly take action to rescind its vote on July 16, 2025, regarding*

*the indemnification of Lindsay Dahlheimer: Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Darcy, and Mr. Konstantino. Motion passed.*

Mrs. Caramanello stated that she believes the conversation should be public, but if this is prohibited by legal statutes, she understands there isn't another option.

Board entered Executive Session at time stamp 6:10.

Board returned from Executive Session at time stamp 7:28.

### **Motion to Rescind or Amend Action Previously Taken**

*Mrs. Cowan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, that the Board of Education officially concludes that its vote on July 16th, 2025 regarding indemnification was not required and had no legal effect, and therefore, that said vote is formally rescinded.*

*All in favor of approving the motion that the Board of Education officially concludes that its vote on July 16th, 2025 regarding indemnification was not required and had no legal effect, and therefore, that said vote is formally rescinded: Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Darcy, and Mr. Konstantino. Board Members opposed: Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Moore. Motion passed by majority vote.*

Mrs. Petrella commented that the motion to rescind the July 16th, 2025 vote does not impact the insurance company's decisions regarding indemnification as well as her belief that the Board should support indemnification of any past, present, or future board member when applicable. Mrs. Caramanello emphasized that this is a personal statement and not a statement on behalf of the Board. Dr. Darcy reflected that, based on the information available at the time, she would not have changed her original vote. Dr. Darcy clarified that her decision to rescind the July 16th, 2025 vote was because indemnification decisions are ultimately made by the insurance company, not the Board.

### **Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. Board of Education Meeting - February 25, 2026**

*Mr. Konstantino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cowan, to approve the February 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the February 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Darcy, and Mr. Konstantino. Motion passed.*

### **Superintendent's Report**

In her superintendent's report, Dr. Leggett highlighted several key updates. Dr. Leggett invited all board members, especially new ones, to visit the Middlesex Transition Academy to see its innovative programs. She also shared that the district's focus on restorative practices and core ethical values this month emphasizes empathy and understanding. Additionally, the leadership team is engaging in professional learning with Dr. Valaida Wise on addressing harassment and discrimination, developing proactive and reactive system-wide approaches from pre-K through 12, which complements the district's new school

climate law and ongoing monitoring of behavioral data. Dr. Leggett provided an update on the Memorial School project, noting that Phase III proposal documents are officially out to bid and Phase II bid awards have been approved by the building committee. Planning for Phase IV (furniture, fixtures, and equipment), is underway, and a brief update on the school naming committee will follow. The most significant news is that the state legislature increased the reimbursement rate for the project from 53% to 68%, which could save the district an estimated \$10 million, reducing the financial burden on local taxpayers for the \$76 million renovation, a major win for the district. Additionally, Mr. Roraback added that despite the financial reduction on tax payers, there is still oversight on how money is spent and budgeting moving forward. Mrs. Cowan noted that local representatives have supported this project, and it would be nice if they were recognized when construction begins or at the official groundbreaking. Dr. Leggett and board members agreed local representatives have worked hard and they would be notified of project updates.

### **Staff Report**

#### **A. Director of Finance – Kim Neubig**

Mrs. Neubig presented the financial update. The general fund ended February with 62% of expenditures spent, 99% encumbered, and 64% of revenue received. End of year purchasing is winding down and purchase orders are being closed out as part of the process to project the end of year financial position.

### **Chairman's Update**

Mr. Moore reported that the ACES Board Executive Director is retiring and there will be a newly appointed Executive Director. There will be an upcoming vote on their budget, scheduled for tomorrow. Mr. Moore thanked volunteers serving on district committees (like capstone projects) and highlighted the upcoming fall interviews for students, emphasizing the value of community involvement and training opportunities for participants.

### **Board Communications and Professional Development**

Mr. Moore discussed snow removal and school closure decisions. No new requests or changes have been made yet, though the topic has received media attention. For next year, snow days have been added to the calendar around Memorial Day weekend, while this year's school year is scheduled to end on June 18, with graduation on June 12. Dr. Leggett reported that the shoreline tournament, originally scheduled the day of Prom, has been rescheduled to May 20.

### **New Business**

#### **A. Vote to Approve RFQ/P 2025-007 Hazardous Material Construction Testing and Monitoring Services as recommended by the RSD 13 Building Committee**

Five vendors responded to the RFP, and the Building Committee recommended Pannoni as the selected vendor. Board approval is required for contracts exceeding a certain dollar threshold, and a motion was presented for consideration.

*Mr. Simmons made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cowan, to approve the award of RFP 2025-007, Regional School District 13 Memorial School hazardous material construction testing and monitoring state projects 213-0051 RNV/ EA to Pannoni. for the base bid not to exceed \$80,168.50.*

*All in favor of the approval of the award of RFP 2025-007, Regional School District 13 Memorial School hazardous material construction testing and monitoring state projects 213-0051 RNV/ EA to Pannoni. for the base bid not to exceed \$80,168.50 as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Darcy, and Mr. Konstantino. Motion passed.*

## **B. Policy Review**

1. Second read and possible vote
  - a. Library Collection Development and Maintenance
  - b. Library Displays and Programs
  - c. Library Materials Review and Reconsideration

Mrs. Cowan presented the second reading of the policies. No changes were proposed since the last review. These three policies, developed through the work of Jenny Lussier, were brought forward for adoption, and the board opted to adopt all three as presented.

*Mrs. Cowan made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Caramanello, to approve the Library Collection Development and Maintenance Policy, the Library Displays and Programs Policy, and the Library Materials Review and Reconsideration Policy as presented.*

*All in favor of the approval of the Library Collection Development and Maintenance Policy, the Library Displays and Programs Policy, and the Library Materials Review and Reconsideration Policy as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Darcy, and Mr. Konstantino. Motion passed.*

## **Committee Reports**

### **A. School Naming Committee Meeting - February 18 and March 4, 2026**

Mrs. Cowan reported that two meetings have been held and three finalist names have been selected: Three Oaks Elementary School, Wadsworth Falls Elementary School, and Veterans Memorial Elementary School. Beginning Monday, students and staff will vote: students in lower grades will vote through classroom voting and students (gr. 5-12) and staff will vote through a Google Form. Community members will also be able to participate by submitting ballots at town halls Monday through Thursday of the following week. The committee will tally the votes and meet on March 25 to determine the top choice, which will then be presented to the full Board of Education for an official vote at the April 1 meeting. The

early timeline allows time to begin implementing the new name across materials and planning related items such as branding and mascots.

### **B. Building Committee Meeting - February 18 and March 4, 2026**

Mr. Moore and Mr. Simmons presented an update from the Building Committee. At the February meeting, the committee approved the phase two contract and authorized payment of project-related invoices. At the March 4 meeting, the committee approved moving forward with the hazardous materials instruction, testing, and monitoring contract that was later brought to the Board of Education for approval. The committee also began discussing phase four (FF&E—furniture, fixtures, and equipment) and determined that using the state’s pre-approved vendor pricing program would likely be the most efficient and streamlined option for purchasing furnishings and equipment.

### **C. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - February 25, 2026**

Mrs. Petrella reported that the Student Achievement Committee reviewed several topics, including high school graduation requirements, particularly the proposal to reduce the English requirement from four credits to three. Community members raised concerns about potential impacts on college admissions, maintaining district academic standards, and students who might later decide to attend college after completing only three English credits. After discussion, the committee agreed to send the policy back to the Policy Committee for further review. The committee also reviewed 10 years of state assessment data (SBAC for ELA and math, and NGSS for science). ELA and math scores have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels, with math remaining largely static but showing early signs of recovery. Science scores remained strong but have declined slightly since the pandemic. Planned next steps include aligning curriculum, strengthening instructional practices, addressing unfinished learning, especially in math, and continuing to monitor progress. Additional discussions included improving mid-year evaluation reporting to focus more on student growth, reviewing how district data teams analyze performance and use universal screeners for early intervention, and improving communication with parents about assessment results. The committee also discussed state-provided online courses and whether they should go through the district’s approval process, as well as updates on the strategic planning and Vision of a Graduate initiative, with focus groups completed and planning categories being finalized. Finally, Will Overton, a high school student, was approved to join the Student Achievement Committee.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Benbow addressed the board regarding concerns about his child. Due to student confidentiality rules, the matter could not be discussed publicly. The superintendent noted that a meeting had been scheduled earlier to review the issue and offered to coordinate another available time for him if needed to continue addressing the concern privately.

### **Adjournment**

*Mrs. Cowan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to adjourn the meeting.*

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

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio