**Regional School District 13** **Board of Education** **October 14, 2026**

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

Board of Education Members Present: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Konstantino, and Mr. Viens.
Board of Education Members Absent: Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Stone, and Mr. DelVecchio
Administration Present: Dr. Leggett, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Viens, to approve the agenda.*

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

**Presentation and Recognition**

A. Introduce New Strong Assistant Principal Sheila Riffle

Dr. Leggett introduced Strong's Assistant Principal Mrs. Riffle to the Board members. Ms. Riffle shared that she has had a very positive start at Strong School and feels warmly welcomed by students, staff, and families. She praised the students' curiosity, said she is enjoying working with the middle-school age group, and described the school as making effective use of its space. Board members welcomed her and noted her efforts to connect with families through positive calls home.

B. MTA – Wesleyan Connections

Samantha Winkler, Program Director of Middlesex Transition Academy, presented students Callie and Joey to describe their experiences with the Transition Academy. Callie described how Middlesex Transition Academy helps her build independence through practical life skills, college coursework, and hands-on work experience at local businesses and community sites. She also highlighted community outings and social activities that help her practice budgeting and social skills, and invited everyone to MTA's first Unified event at Wesleyan on Friday, November 20. Joe shared that he works in Wesleyan's cafeteria, cleaning tables and replacing napkins, and enjoys campus activities such as walking the track, Unified basketball, and social outings. He leads stretching at Unified events after learning exercises through the High Five for Fitness program.

The Middlesex Transition Academy invited the community to an open house on the 27th from 4 to 6 p.m., where visitors can drop in to learn about its programs. Samantha Winkler shared that the academy is rebuilding partnerships with Wesleyan and offering monthly student-led campus activities, including Zumba, hip-hop, and crafts.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Approval of Minutes**

A. Board of Education Meeting - September 9, 2026

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Viens, to approve the Board of Education Meeting Minutes from September 9, 2026.*

*All in favor of approving the Board of Education September 9, 2026 Meeting Minutes as presented: Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Dr. Darcy, and Mr. Viens. Mrs. Cowan abstained. Motion passed by majority vote.*

**Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Leggett highlighted a new partnership with Middletown Adult Education, which offers programs for families and older students, and praised Mrs. Neubig and the Central Office team for the district's top bond-sale rating for helping reduce borrowing costs. She shared Jamie Vollmer's "List" as a resource for budget discussions about schools' expanding responsibilities, which helps to add perspective for school costs. She also reported receiving $79,384.00 in facilities grant funds for plumbing repairs and a new auditorium light board. Dr. Leggett thanked the Youth Soccer League for contributing toward field lights and celebrated the strong community turnout at the beam-signing event.

**Three Oaks Memorial School Project Update**

Ms. Cahill, Project Executive from STV, reported that underground work and concrete foundations are nearing completion, marking a major project milestone. The addition is fully framed, steel work is finishing up elsewhere, and masonry, interior framing, firewalls, and mechanical and plumbing rough-ins are underway. Ms. Cahill praised contractor La Rosa and the strong community participation at the beam-signing event. The project remains behind schedule, but O&G is using longer workdays and Saturdays to recover time. A clearer recovery schedule is expected once the steel contractor finishes and other trades can work more freely. STV and the project team are coordinating more closely to streamline work between the architect and builder.

A. Brewster and Lyman Disposition Update

The Board is reviewing the legal, deed, and zoning requirements for potentially selling the Brewster and Lyman school properties, with an emphasis on a transparent process and appropriate future use.

**Chairman Update**

Mr. Moore presented the Chairman's update. The committee added two students to the Student Achievement Committee and is considering another student application for the School District Climate Committee. Members discussed reviving an international teacher exchange program, with possible visits to Portugal focused on ocean-related topics or South Korea focused on emerging technologies, though a new program may still be about a year away. They also discussed getting earlier notice of senior mock interview and capstone interview dates so volunteers can participate. Finally, the legislative breakfast will be rescheduled until after the election, with December 4 or 7 suggested as possible dates.

**Staff Report**

A. Director of Finance – Kim Neubig

Mrs. Neubig reported that at the end of September, the General Fund had spent 19% of its budget, encumbered 94%, and received 20% of budgeted revenue. The district issued construction-related bond anticipation notes and bonds in stages to match projected cash needs and avoid borrowing too much too soon. The additional 15% reimbursement is expected to reduce the final borrowing amount, and strong interest from bidders reflected confidence in the district's credit rating.

**New Business - Discussions and Possible Votes**

A. Eversource Certificate of District Resolution

*Mr. Konstantino made a motion, seconded by Dr. Darcy, to resolve that this district grant and convey to the Connecticut Light and Power Company, DVA, Eversource Energy, a corporation chartered by the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut and having its principal office in the town of Berlin in the state of Connecticut, its successors and assigns permanent rights for the installation, maintenance, and repair of electric and gas lines over, under, and across land of the company situated in the town of Middlefield and state of Connecticut as set forth in the proposed easement presented to this meeting which is hereby ordered, filed with the records of this meeting, and resolve that Sydney Leggett, the Superintendent of this district hereby is authorized to execute and deliver in the name of the district an easement presented to this meeting and to do any and all other acts to effectuate the foregoing.*

*All in favor of approving the Eversource certificate of District Resolution as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Konstantino, and Mr. Viens. Motion passed.*

B. Resolution for Award of $8,100,000.00 General Obligation Bonds Issue of 2026

*Mr. Konstantino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cowan, for the resolution of Regional School District 13 of the State of Connecticut to be awarded $8,100,000.00 in general obligation bonds, issue of 2026 whereas, Regional School District 13 of the State of Connecticut, comprise of member towns of Durham and Middlefield. The district, through its legislative process, has duly authorized the issuance of its bonds, notes, or temporary notes for costs related to various projects, and whereas, said authorizations provide that the Chairman of the Board of Education and the Treasurer of the Board of Education are authorized to sell bonds of the district, by public sale, or by negotiation and whereas, on October 13, 2026, the Chairman of the Board of Education and the Treasurer of the Board of Education determined that the sale of the bonds is in the public interest and proceeded to sell the district's $8,100,000.00 general obligation bond issue of 2026 dated October 21, 2026. The bonds, in accordance with the terms, details, and particulars of the bonds, as provided in the notice of sale and of the preliminary official statement for the bonds dated October 5. 2026. Now, therefore, be it resolved at the proposal of Hilltop Securities to purchase the bonds at par plus a premium as detailed in the copy of the proposal attached as Schedule A, together with the accrued interest from the date of the bonds to the date of delivery, if any, is accepted, and the bonds are hereby awarded to said purchaser in accordance with the terms and conditions of the proposal and the interest rates on the bonds shall be fixed as specified in said proposal and further resolved that the proposals attached as Schedule B are hereby rejected.*

*All in favor of accepting the Resolution for Award of $8,100,000.00 General Obligation Bonds Issue of 2026 as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Konstantino, and Mr. Viens. Motion passed.*

C. Resolution for Award of $24,000,000.00 General Obligation Bond Anticipation Notes

*Mr. Konstantino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cowan, for the resolution of Regional School District 13 of the State of Connecticut to be awarded $24,000,000.00 in general obligation bond anticipation notes. Whereas, Regional School District 13 of the state of Connecticut, comprised of member towns Durham and Middlefield, the district, through its legislative process, has duly authorized the issuance of its bonds, notes, or temporary notes for costs related to various projects. Said authorizations provide that the Chairman of the Board of Education and the Treasurer of the Board of Education are authorized to sell notes of the district at public sale or by negotiation and Whereas, on October 13, 2026, Chairman of the Board of Education and the Treasurer of the Board of Education determined that the sale of the notes is in the public interest and proceeded to sell the district's $24,000,000.00 general obligation bonds, anticipation notes, dated October 21, 2026, the notes, in accordance with the terms, details, and particulars of the notes as provided in the notice of sale and the preliminary official statement for the notes dated October 5, 2026.Now, therefore, be it resolved that the proposal PD financial products to purchase the notes at par plus a premium as detailed in the copy of the proposal attached as Schedule A together with accrued interest from the date of the notes to the date of delivery, if any, is accepted and the notes are hereby awarded to said purchaser in accordance with the term Interest rates on the notes shall be fixed as specified in that proposal and further resolve that the proposals attached as Schedule B are hereby rejected.*

*All in favor of accepting the Resolution for Award of $24,000,000.00 General Obligation Bond Anticipation Notes as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Konstantino, and Mr. Viens. Motion passed.*

D. Review 2027-2028 Budget Calendar

Mrs. Neubig presented the Budget Calendar for fiscal year 2027-28. The draft budget calendar follows the district's usual process, with school budget materials distributed October 30 and due back December 4, followed by reviews and meetings with administrators. Key milestones include the January 23 board strategic planning meeting, February and March budget sessions, the April 7 public hearing, and the May 3 district meeting and May 4 referendum. Board members were asked to flag any scheduling conflicts.

E. Federal Tax Credits - Overview and Discussion

The Board discussed a proposed federal education tax-credit program that could begin in 2027, noting Connecticut has not yet decided whether to participate. Dr. Leggett raised concerns about equity, oversight, and possible effects on federal education funding, while asking the Board to consider whether the district should pursue funds if the state opts in. The Board also reviewed a letter opposing the possible end of the E-rate program, which provides the district with roughly $90,000.00 for technology infrastructure. No objections were raised to sending the letter.

F. Finance Committee Membership

Mr. Moore discussed the Finance Committee membership. William Castro and Teresa Opalacz (Durham) were elected to serve on the Finance Committee. Dr. Darcy had been elected by Middlefield, but had not yet received information about the role, underscoring a need for better communication from the town. Two current members, Mr. Stone and Mr. DelVecchio, have not been attending, so the Board proposed removing them and adding Mr. Viens and Mr. Simmons to the committee. Both members agreed. The committee meets three times a year and its next meeting was planned for November 11 at 5 p.m. The agenda may include an overview of the budget calendar, town allocations, and property sale updates.

G. Policy Review

1. First read on the below policies

a. Policy and Regulation Systems 9312

The first reading of Policy and Regulation 3.1.2 involved minor wording cleanup to align it with the Shipman policy and codify existing good practices. No substantive changes or required debate were noted.

b. Suicide Prevention and Intervention 5141.6 - Shipman

The committee reviewed Policy 5141.6 on suicide prevention and intervention. The required revision clarifies that any staff member who is concerned a student may be at risk should take action; a student does not need to directly disclose suicidal thoughts for the concern to be addressed. The committee chose not to add the optional peer-based suicide-prevention program language because the district does not currently have such a program, though this will be revisited later through strategic planning.

2. Second read and possible vote on the below policies

a. Field Trips 6153

The Board reviewed Field Trips 6153 Policy. The regulations now state that, to support student safety and supervision, best practice is to plan for at least two authorized adults, employees or designated volunteers, on off-campus trips whenever possible.

This is guidance in the regulations, not a change to the policy requiring a separate board vote. The wording recognizes that two adults may not always be feasible, depending on the trip and circumstances. Volunteer qualifications are addressed in the district's volunteer policy.

b. Meal Charging 5542

c. Budget Procedures and Line-Item Transfers 3160

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino, to approve Field Trips 6153 Policy, Meal Charging 5542 Policy, and Budget Procedures and Line-Item Transfers 3160 Policy as presented.*

*All in favor of accepting Field Trips 6153 Policy, Meal Charging 5542 Policy, and Budget Procedures and Line-Item Transfers 3160 Policy as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Konstantino, and Mr. Viens. Motion passed.*

**Committee Reports**

A. Building Committee Meeting - September 2, 2026
B. Building Committee Meeting - September 16, 2026

The Building Committee is awaiting a cost report next week to compare restoring four pickleball courts with reducing them to two and using potential savings for playground improvements, including poured rubber for safety and accessibility. Dr. Leggett suggested other ways of honoring the community portion

of funding ($20,000 out of the $100,000 for the pickleball courts). The building committee will make the decision after considering costs and remaining funds.

C. Finance Committee Meeting - September 16, 2026

The Finance Committee met to review outstanding questions about permit fees and briefly discuss potential budget matters for the coming year. Representatives from Durham attended; no one from Middlefield was present. The discussion served as a general update and regroup. Durham representatives expressed concern that the permit-fee costs may be deemed ineligible for reimbursement. Durham could be responsible for about 65% if the costs are found ineligible. The concern was heightened because the costs are reportedly not being tracked, making eligibility uncertain.

D. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - September 23, 2026

The Achievement Committee reviewed grade-level performance over the past year and discussed recommendations to improve math and ELA results. Members also received updates on summer programming, the start of the school year, the Kindergarten Academy, and MTSS. The committee is continuing to refine how student data should be presented.

The discussion also covered the district's K–12 literacy plan and the proposed Seal of Civic Engagement. Dr. Leggett has joined the state committee developing the seal's requirements, though the criteria have not yet been finalized. Although the state indicated the seal could be awarded to students graduating in 2027, members raised concerns about the late timeline and how expectations would be communicated to students and families. They agreed to revisit the issue once the criteria are available, including whether this year's seniors should be eligible and what the seal would represent.

E. Policy Committee Meeting - September 30, 2026

The Policy Committee reviewed the policies discussed at the meeting and also discussed the policy on administering medication. That policy will return to the committee, with changes forthcoming. The nurses asked to hold off because a new requirement calls for students with an asthma diagnosis to have an asthma action plan. The district plans to notify families in the superintendent's newsletter, with nurses following up. Members noted that obtaining an action plan from a doctor may take time, and that families can face practical limits on prescriptions and supplies, such as inhalers and EpiPens.

F. Building Committee Meeting – October 7, 2026

The Building Committee met on October 7 and discussed the tennis courts. It is considering a four- or five-year option costing about $70,000.00 and plans to bring forward a proposal. In November, the committee may ask the Board to waive the bidding process. The district issued an RFI and received five responses; only one appears to meet its needs. The other options cost $350,000.00 or more, at which point a full repair may make more sense. The committee said a formal bid process could delay the work by six to eight weeks, and noted that any waiver would need to be legally permissible.

G. School Naming Committee Meeting - October 14, 2026

The committee will survey the community for mascot ideas, narrow the choices to three, and then seek input from students and staff before a mascot reveal. It will also gather ideas for naming the common areas and finding a more visible place for the community plaque. The district is working with community knitters and are planning 100 acorn hats for Three Oaks Memorial first kindergarten class and an artist-in-residence visit tied to the tree theme.

**Board Communications and Professional Development**

Mr. Moore acknowledged a request to adjust the schedule because a financing meeting was also taking place that evening. Members noted that scheduling is difficult because of district events, sports, and other activities. Although the district generally avoids scheduling conflicts on Wednesdays, some events, such as financial-aid sessions, may be limited to dates offered by outside organizations. Exceptions are made for important events, such as the Veterans Day concert.

**Public Comment**

There was no Public Comment.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cowan, to adjourn the meeting.*

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

**Board of Education Negotiations Meeting**

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio