

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, September 23, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee Members Present: Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Allen, Ms. Hamilton, Dr. Darcy, Daphne Liss (student member), and Will Overton (student member)

Committee Members Absent: Mr. Simmons and Mr. Viens

Administration Present: Dr. Leggett, Superintendent of Schools and Ms. Light, Director of Teaching and Learning

Mrs. Petrella called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

There was no public comment. Due to technical issues, there were no community members attending the meeting online.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Allen, to approve the agenda as presented.

All in favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Allen, Ms. Hamilton, and Dr. Darcy. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes – May 27, 2026

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, to approve the May 27, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

All in favor of approving the May 27, 2026 meeting minutes as presented: Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Allen, Ms. Hamilton, and Dr. Darcy. Motion passed.

Discussion/Action Items**Introduction of New Student Members**

Mrs. Petrella introduced the new student committee members Will Overton and Daphne Liss. Daphne Liss' appointment to the committee will be presented to the Board for approval at the next meeting.

Student Achievement Data Overview

Ms. Light presented to the committee the Teaching and Learning department's student achievement data overview. The presentation reviewed SBAC and NGSS data, showing that ELA performance index was 71.4, above its five-year average of 70.4 and the state average of 59.3. Grades 4 and 6 met the state indicator of 75. The district's math performance index was 64.1, matching its five-year average. Mathematics scores have remained stagnant, with particular concerns around sixth-grade transitions and certain student cohorts. The Teaching and Learning department plans to investigate these trends further, examine subgroup performance, strengthen math curriculum and instruction through coaching and assessment, and continue implementing the district's literacy plan.

The discussion clarified that SBAC growth scores measure whether students met individualized expected growth targets, not simply whether they were proficient, and noted substantial gaps in growth and performance for high-needs students. Participants cautioned against treating district comparisons as the main measure of success and stressed the importance of supporting every student, including students with additional learning needs. The committee also discussed improving testing conditions and student engagement, using hands-on and inquiry-based science experiences, and found encouraging early evidence that math playlists in grades 4–5 may be contributing to improved growth.

Overview of Summer Programming - ESY and Kindergarten Academy

Ms. Light reported that 55 of the 73 current kindergarten students (about 75%) attended Kindergarten Academy. The program ran four days a week for two hours a day, helping children learn school routines, practice readiness skills, and become familiar with the building. Staff reported that the experience reduces anxiety on the first day of school. The academy is funded through the district budget. Extended School Year (ESY) provides four weeks of individualized instruction for students whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) specify summer services. In total, 56 students from pre-K through grade 12 attended Monday through Thursday for three hours a day. Nine faculty members and 21 paraprofessionals supported students' academic, communication, and life-skills needs, alongside recreational learning.

Additionally, the Middlesex Transition Academy (MTA) program serves young adults who have aged out of high school, generally through age 21 or 22. Ten students attended a four-week summer session, three hours a day, Monday through Thursday. Instruction included academics, social skills, vocational training, and independent living. Activities included laundry, planning a restaurant outing, and budgeting for a pizza purchase. The academy operates at Wesleyan University and also serves students from other districts; tuition is paid by students' home districts.

Literacy Planning

Ms. Light presented the initial literacy plan for the district. The Regional School District 13 literacy plan aims to enhance student growth and reduce performance gaps. The district has experienced stagnant

growth in recent years, and the goal is to become a top-performing school in the state. The plan involves using various metrics such as DIBELS 8 for early literacy and reading comprehension, SBAC ELA, and EL education benchmarks to assess and improve student performance. These assessments are conducted at different times throughout the year and involve both standardized tests and teacher observations.

The committee discussed how teacher performance and instructional methods are also considered crucial to student success. The plan highlights the importance of supporting teacher effectiveness through classroom observations and professional development opportunities. The district encourages teachers to share successful techniques with their peers, fostering a collaborative environment for professional growth. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process was also mentioned as a framework to address instructional concerns at various levels, from individual classrooms to the district as a whole. The plan also addressed PLC data meetings, where grade-level teachers regularly review assessment data to identify learning gaps and collaboratively develop plans for reteaching or targeted support. Teachers are responsible for bringing and analyzing their own data, with meeting minutes and information shared with administrators, interventionists, and other relevant staff through systems such as LinkIt. The district is also working to shift responsibility for PLCs back to teacher teams so instructional coaches can focus on classroom coaching, while noting the need to develop a current K–2 ELA curriculum framework.

Ms. Light identified that the district seeks to improve the rollout of programs and ensure alignment with Common Core Standards. The EL program, in particular, was emphasized for its need to align with these standards and ensure students are adequately prepared at each grade level. The district plans to bring in consultants to work with teachers on targeted small group instruction and effective lesson planning. This approach has proven successful in other districts, leading to improved student performance over time.

The discussion focused on district initiatives including early childhood collaboration, literacy, play-based learning, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Literacy may become a Pre-K–12 priority, with teachers across subjects incorporating reading-comprehension strategies and using available professional-development resources. The district is also exploring how to expand UDL beyond the initial group of participating teachers, including using technology and AI tools to identify learning barriers and make instruction more accessible to all students.

Seal of Biliteracy

Dr. Leggett discussed the Seal of Biliteracy, noting that approximately 12–15% of graduating students have earned it in recent years and that students can qualify through proficiency in any two languages.

Seal of Civic Engagement

The committee reviewed the proposed Seal of Civic Engagement, focusing on how to define meaningful civic engagement, what types of community service should qualify, and how to avoid simply counting required service hours. The committee agreed to continue developing criteria and seek input from staff and students. The committee also noted that the civic engagement seal likely will not be ready for this year's seniors and briefly discussed upcoming high school course proposals that will be reviewed at the November meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Allen, Ms. Hamilton, and Dr. Darcy. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio