

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Saturday, January 24, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board members present: Mr. Moore, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Konstantino, Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Simmons

Board members absent: Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. DelVecchio and Mr. Stone

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

Public/staff present: Ms. DelGrego, Ms. Suchy, Mrs. Fisher and Mr. Ehler

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Approval of Agenda**

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

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

### **Public Comment – at the beginning of the meeting public comment shall refer to items on the agenda**

None.

### **Approval of Community Member Volunteers for Ad Hoc Committee on Naming Schools**

The co-chairs of the ad hoc committee for naming the new school (policy 3281), Mr. Roraback and Mrs. Cowan, suggest adding the following members:

Kelly Lynch and Emily Kahnke from Durham

Adam Padilla and Janina Eddinger from Middlefield

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Konstantino to approve the members of the ad hoc School Naming Committee.*

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

### **Approval to Appoint Additional Member to Building Committee**

Mr. Moore explained that Mr. Croston has a great deal of building and building committee experience and that, given the work to be done, the current project will benefit from his expertise and this additional committee member.

*Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Dr. Darcy, recommending the addition of Robert Croston to the Building Committee.*

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

### **2026-2027 Budget Discussion**

Mrs. Neubig discussed a few highlighted preliminary numbers that will change as further discussions are had and further decisions are made as more information becomes available.

The preliminary gross budget increase is at 6% and the net is at 7.52%. The net budget increase is reflective of the little to no fund balance available to balance the budget as it has been used as a budgeting strategy to reduce annual increases. At this point, there is no longer a fund balance to be used, however, that remains fluid based on how this current year ends and the availability of completed project funding transfers. The net budget is the amount the towns pay their assessments on. The gross budget is the amount of the expenditure increases.

Major cost drivers this year include:

- Salaries are budgeted at 100% this year. Over the past few years, a vacancy factor has been applied, but this budgeting strategy no longer works. Last year, salaries were budgeted at 98%, so the increase is due to the full budgeting as well as contractual increases.
- Health Insurance is anticipated to be renewed at a 14% increase. The district, along with the towns are currently seeking bids for alternate insurance carriers, but the experience rate is high, so it may be unlikely we receive any bids.
- The Capital Reserve is funded at the 2% cap for districts. This includes things such as Glycol, a Bleacher Automation System, establishing a turf, and track replacement cycle, continuation of funding for the chiller and pumps at Strong and the potential for work on the tennis courts.
- Operating Services has increased due to out of district placements and transportation. New this year is the need to budget for RSD 13 students at MTA as the revenue is no longer enough to cover the amount of district students at MTA. Staff to Student ratio will be provided. This account also has yearly district-wide insurance increases.
- Debt Service shows an increase this year, as it was paid for by the bond premium held by the capital reserve account last year. This is NOT new debt, nor is it debt related to Memorial School.

Dr. Leggett discussed staffing reductions and additions. Mrs. Cowan asked about class sizes in regards to staffing reductions and if any central office cuts will be made. Dr. Leggett stated there are options the Board can look at including not hiring a new curriculum director.

The Board discussed the cost of options for the tennis court, including continuing with yearly repairs, resurfacing the courts and utilizing out of district tennis courts for practices and home games. It was emphasized by Mrs. Neubig that the capital reserve does not have any funds for roof replacements at both CRHS and Strong which will be due in roughly two years. There is no way to save the amount of funds needed for these roofs while being subject to the 2% cap. The district will need to bond for these roofs.

Mrs. Cowan asked if the district can bond with the Town of Durham, Mrs. Neubig did not feel that was an available option or would even be to anyone's benefit, but will ask the bond advisor.

Dr. Leggett discussed proposals submitted by administrators and which will be included in the budget proposal and which will not.

### **5 Year Capital Plan**

Mrs. Neubig distributed a 5-year plan for CRHS and Strong noting this represents a study done in 2015 which has costs being escalated each year. Mrs. Cowan suggested the district get an updated study.

**Public Comment – at the end of the meeting public comment shall refer to items not on the agenda**

CT Soccer Club President Andrew Ehler of Durham would like improved communication and policy distribution in school districts and a prioritization of who gets to use fields and high school facilities. Students who play on the turf may be bumped for revenue producing programming. He has used the calendar, but it appears to only be for “permission” which ends up with overlapping events. He is competing with other sports programs with more stability in scheduling; it’s difficult to run programs. There is no clear, quick, or reliable channel of communication for this information. Dr. Leggett clarified that there is no bumping of students for revenue producing programming; priority is always given to students.

Teacher Rebecca Suchy would like clarification of English requirements in the policy.

Teacher Emily DelGrego wanted to know how the potential addition of a full-time LMS position would work in the high school given the constraints at this space.

**Adjournment**

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.