



The District Dispatch

A Message from the Board of Education

This year has been one of change and success. We accepted the retirement of Dr Douglas Schuch and appointed Dr. Patricia Charles in January as our Interim Superintendent.

After an extensive review, we hired Dr. Sydney Leggett as our new Superintendent, who started with us on July 1, 2025. The Board looks forward to supporting Dr. Leggett and her leadership team as they bring a new strategic vision to RSD13.

We also accepted the retirement of Cheryl Gonzalez, Principal of Strong School. Following a thorough review of over 40 applicants, a committee formed by the administration selected David Kimball, who has been working closely with Noelle Durkin. Ms. Durkin will be joining him at Strong as the Assistant Principal for the next two years

Congratulations and Good Luck to the Class of 2025! We were fortunate to have a picture-perfect evening for graduation, and as you will see in the newsletter, our graduates are heading off to exciting programs and careers in the next phases of their lives.

We appreciate the support of our towns in passing the 2025-2026 budget. We worked hard to approve a budget that meets our students' needs while addressing capital challenges due to our aging infrastructure. We also want to acknowledge the many community members who volunteered countless hours reviewing CRHS Senior Capstone Projects, participating in Career Day presentations at Strong, conducting Mock Interviews at CRHS, and supporting all our schools in so many ways.

The Board's committees worked diligently this year to complete policy reviews, develop curriculum, and monitor student growth. We look forward to the Superintendent hiring the approved Curriculum Director position in the spring to join the Administrative Team. Funding will also be allocated during the school year to support curriculum work, in collaboration with Dr. Siegel, our Associate Director of Innovation and Learning.

We are thrilled to have received grant approval for the Memorial School Project from the Department of Administrative Services, with the support of our legislators through special legislation. This project now enters its next chapter under the authority of the Building Committee. We have full confidence in the team's ability to deliver a new Memorial School that will meet the needs of all PreK-5th grade students in our district for decades to come.

We look forward to a successful 2025-2026 school year!

A Message from the New Superintendent

I am honored and excited to begin my first days as Superintendent of Regional School District 13. It's a privilege to join the dedicated students, educators, families, and community members of Durham, Middlefield, and Rockfall, and I step into this role with deep appreciation for all that's already been done in this school community to support public education.

Over the coming weeks and months, I look forward to getting to know many of you—through school visits, community events, and thoughtful conversations. Each interaction will help me better understand the unique strengths, traditions, and aspirations that define this district.

This year, we'll embark on a strategic planning process that will shape our shared vision for the future. I hope this opportunity allows us to shape this work by listening to everyone's voices so we can bring everyone's ideas, energy, and perspectives to the table. Together, I'm confident we'll build upon our already strong foundation to foster an environment where all students thrive, innovation is encouraged, and every member of our community feels valued.

For those around during the remainder of the summer, please feel free to stop by and say hello! I look forward to seeing many of you soon and to officially welcoming everyone back to the new school year in September. Until then, enjoy all that summer has to offer!

Warmly,

Dr. Sydney Leggett

Board of Education Committee Updates

Policy Committee

Over the course of the school year the Policy Committee has done a full review of all 133 district policies and has updated each to meet current Connecticut State regulations and guidance from Connecticut Association of Board of Education.

The process of adopting a new or updated policy requires:

- 1) Review and recommendation of changes in collaboration with the Superintendent
- 2) Presentation to the full board of the revised policy
- 3) A reading of the policy at a full board meeting
- 4) a reading and vote to approve the policy the following regular meeting

Find our Policies here:

<https://www.rsd13ct.org/Our-District/Board-of-Education/Policies/index.html>

Student Achievement Committee

The Student Achievement Committee focused this year on curriculum updates, instructional innovation, and student performance. Key efforts included piloting grade 4 math playlists, reviewing K-5 science and social studies, and expanding college-credit courses.

The committee analyzed assessment data (i-Ready, IXL, DIBELS, PSAT) with Dr Siegel to guide instruction and support student growth.

The district's curriculum handbook was restored, reviewed, and revised creating a streamlined process for curriculum revisions and new course proposals as the district heads toward a new strategic vision.

Several new high school courses were approved, including Experimental Design, Fire Science, Unified Health, Art of Teaching, Exercise Science, and E-Sports.

Classroom showcases highlighted enrichment, mathematics, robotics, and the arts. The committee looks forward to working with Dr. Leggett and Dr Siegel on the districtwide strategic planning process to support diverse programming, high academic achievement and growth along all grades levels.

Congratulations CRHS Class of 2025.

We hope that you always find a home here as a Coginchaug Blue Devil.



*Where is the
Class of 2025 headed?*

College Programs

70 graduates to Four Year Colleges

15 graduates to Community Colleges

Albertus Magnus College
Amherst College
Bates College
Brigham Young University - Idaho
Central Connecticut State
University
Coastal Carolina University
Colorado State University - Fort
Collins
Connecticut State Community
College
East Carolina University
Eastern Connecticut State
University
Elon University
Endicott College
Fairfield University
Florida Institute of Technology
Ithaca College
Merrimack College

Montserrat College of Art
Providence College
Quinnipiac University
Rutgers University - Newark
Southern Connecticut State University
The University of Alabama
University of Connecticut
University of Hartford
University of Massachusetts - Amherst
University of New Hampshire - Main Campus
University of New Haven
University of Oklahoma - Norman Campus
University of Rhode Island
University of Saint Joseph
Wentworth Institute of Technology
Western New England University
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Technical Schools and Programs:

Major League Barber Academy
Academy Di Capelli - Hairdressing and Esthetician programs
Ricci's TIGI Hairdressing Academy

Headed to Workforce:

Knox County Tennessee Fire Department
Eversource
Wetteman Brothers' Concrete
EMT
Masonicare

Apprenticeship

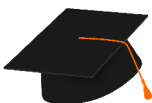
Electrical Business

Post Graduate Programs:

Putnam Science Academy
Middlesex Transition Academy

**Valedictorian:
Annika Liss**

**Co-Salutatorian:
Paige Kaliszewski
Tessa Lussier**



Memorial School Project Renovation and Expansion

In August 2024 Durham and Middlefield voted to amend the Plan of our school district to allow for the consolidation of five schools into three. The plan amendment provides for the renovate as new and expansion of Memorial School to include all students In grades Prek-5th grade. It also allows for the eventual closure of Brewster and John Lyman schools with potential sales or repurposing of those buildings once the project is complete in 2027. Those building closures will be vital to working towards our goal to lower the per pupil expenditure in RSD13 as we focus on expenses for 3 schools Instead of 5.

A bond referendum in November 2024 passed the voters of Durham and Middlefield to fund the project. On this vote's passage the Board and administration worked diligently with the Department of Administrative Services and our state legislators to ask for special legislation under House Bill 7288 be included on the 2025 School Construction Priority List so that we could obtain grant approval and complete the first phase of this project this summer.

The project is now moving ahead in 5 separate phases which are explained below.

- Students will be relocated during construction with 4th grade joining at Lyman and 5th moving to Strong, enabling a faster, safer renovation process and saving over \$1.5 million while students can safely learn away from a construction zone.
- Over \$40 million in state reimbursement granted to this project helps safeguard our local taxpayers while modernizing a vital school facility.
- O&G and QA&M continue working in collaboration with the district and building committee to ensure swing space and subsequent phases are implemented smoothly and responsibly.

In the next few weeks the Building Committee and District Administration will be working on a dedicated page for the Memorial School Project where monthly information can be made available to view for the public on the exciting progress that is taking place! We will communicate that out through Parent Square when it is available!

Phases of the Project

1. Phase One - Swing Space: Grade 4 at Lyman, Grade 5 at Strong (nearing completion)

With Memorial School now closed to start the renovation and expansion of the building our contractors have been working hard all summer to create swing spaces to include 4th grade at John Lyman School and 5th grade at Strong School. The contractors are wrapping up their work at Strong School. At Lyman 2 leased portable classrooms are being delivered and installed as well as a renovation of the existing portables. To accommodate this timeline and ease disruption at the start of the year we have adjusted the school calendar for students to start after Labor Day weekend on September 3rd. The district administration will be communicating information for the start of the school year to include pickup and drop off protocols, school hours and student scheduling In the next few weeks. We are also happy to report that the fields at Memorial Field will still be accessible to our soccer youth league for this fall season.

2. Phase Two - Hazardous material remediation, selective demolition, and site work

Full Schematic Design of the site with O&G Industries, QA&M, and the Building Committee is nearing completion and on target for phase review with with the state to start remediation of hazardous material and select demolition that will allow for the full renovation and expansion.

3. Phase Three - Full renovation and building addition

4. Phase Four - Install fixtures, furniture, and technology

5. Phase Five - Install new playground equipment

Each phase will be carefully reviewed by the DAS as it moves forward and we look forward to O&G providing monthly updates to the public as their exciting work moves forward

BOE Building Committee: A Year of Action and Impact

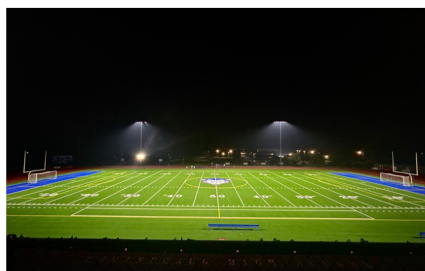
Since the summer of 2024, the Regional School District 13 Building Committee has been consistently working to bring major improvements to our school facilities, athletic infrastructure, and long-term district planning. Their dedication and strategic focus are helping to modernize our schools while enhancing safety, functionality, and community access. Through every project large and small the Building Committee has exemplified diligence, foresight, and a shared commitment to excellence. Their efforts ensure that our facilities not only meet today's needs but are positioned for tomorrow's growth. We are grateful for their hard work and continued partnership as we build a stronger future for RSD13.

Athletic Facilities and Fieldhouse Improvements

A major milestone this year has been the continued success of the fieldhouse and stadium lighting project, funded through a state grant. The Committee oversaw the installation of new lighting at the track, parking lot, and field areas improving visibility and safety for evening events and community use.

Remaining grant funds are being thoughtfully prioritized for further lighting enhancements at the complex to add lighting to the shotput area which is scheduled to be install in October.

Bathrooms in the fieldhouse are now functional and ADA compliant, and discussions continue around future enhancements and collaboration with the community, including heating, locker spaces, and expanded community access.



Planning for New School Construction

The Building Committee has played a critical role in the next phase of the district's future in planning for the construction of the new PK-5 School!

This has included reviewing RFQ/RFP responses for architectural, project management, and construction manager-at-risk services, conducting interviews, and partnering with QA+M Architects to develop swing space logistics, construction timelines with O&G Industries, and building design concepts. The Committee remains in close contact with the state to ensure compliance with construction reimbursement guidelines.



Track Revitalization

The CRHS track just finished a full resurfacing this summer and is now complete. After thorough evaluation and core testing, the Committee approved a BSS100 polyurethane-based system expected to extend the life of the track by 10-12 years. The project also included a long-awaited color change (blue) and updated markings to enhance our track and field events.

Tennis Court Assessments

For the tennis courts, ongoing issues with drainage and subsurface water pressure led to expert soil testing and engineering consultations. The Committee and BOE continues to weigh long-term solutions including a full reconstruction or post-tension concrete surface to address recurring cracking and bubbling. With limited funds currently set aside, this project remains on the radar for planning and potential town collaboration.

Campus and Safety Upgrades

Additional completed or in-progress work includes major paving and drainage upgrades on Pickett Lane and CRHS, sidewalk planning in partnership with the Town of Durham, and field maintenance work at the varsity baseball and softball fields.

The Committee has coordinated repairs, leveled infields, cleaned out drainage structures, and hydro-seeded previously problematic areas all while prioritizing Title IX equity and long-term sustainability.

Sprinkler systems at Strong and CRHS have been connected to the public water supply.



EMPOWERING YOUNG READERS: NEW TITLES, NEW TECH, AND NEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES!

BREWSTER ELEMENTARY LIBRARY

LEARNERS
SERVED **206**



2024-2025
BY THE NUMBERS

4 BOOK RAFFIES

10,016
BOOKS
CHECKED OUT

16,262

Pebble
Go

PEBBLEGO
ARTICLES
ACCESSED

523+
LESSONS TAUGHT



AUTHOR
VISITS

Thanks RJ Julia
for this FREE
author visit with
Phuc Tran!

TOP #1 #2 #3 #4 #5
TITLES



572
BOOKS ADDED
TO COLLECTION

EVENTS, PROGRAMS, & SPECIAL LESSONS:

- Author Visit - Crankee by Phuc Tran
- Book raffles
- Read for the Record
- Holiday Card & Valentine card exchange - U.S.
- Connected 2x w/public librarians
- 2 Scholastic Book Fairs
- Mock Caldecott K & 1
- Robotics & Coding
- Green screen
- World Read Aloud Day
- Read Across America
- Traveling Mural Project
- Bookbreak author events
- Hour of Code
- PebbleGo
- Research
- Inquiry
- UN Sustainable Goals Gr. 1
- Booktalks
- And more!

JOHN LYMAN ELEMENTARY LIBRARY

LEARNERS
SERVED **207**



2024-2025
BY THE NUMBERS

4 BOOK RAFFIES

7,942
BOOKS
CHECKED OUT

10,160

Pebble
Go

ARTICLES ACCESSED

324

Pebble
Go Next

306+
LESSONS TAUGHT



AUTHOR VISITS

Leslie Bultion
- Durham's
Poet
Laureate!

TOP #1 #2 #3 #4 #5
TITLES



389
BOOKS ADDED
TO COLLECTION

EVENTS, PROGRAMS, & SPECIAL LESSONS:

- Author Visits
- Book raffles
- Read for the Record
- Holiday Card Exchange
- Connections around the United States
- Hour of Code
- 2 Scholastic Book Fairs
- Sibert Smaekdown Gr. 2 & 3
- Robotics & Coding
- Green screen
- World Read Aloud Day
- Read Across America
- Traveling Mural Project
- PebbleGo & PebbleGo Next
- Research
- Inquiry
- UN Sustainable Goals Gr. 2
- Booktalks
- And more!

Our youngest readers were busy hubs of reading, learning, and discovery this year! Students checked out thousands of books, explored digital resources like PebbleGo, and took part in engaging lessons and special events. From author visits to robotics and global connections! A big thank you to our Elementary Library Media Specialist, Jenny Lussier and staff, for making it all happen!

Spring Music, Technology, and the Arts Highlights

District Band Night - Memorial 5th Grade Band, Strong 6th, 7th, 8th Grade Bands and Coginchaug Band all participated in this concert. Each band individually performed two pieces to demonstrate the band students' musical growth and development over the years. To close the concert, all 5th through 12th Grade band students performed The Marines Hymn together.

CRHS Jazz Night - The very talented Coginchaug Jazz Combo and Jazz Band created a relaxing concert in the cafeteria providing the audience with coffee, tea, and baked goods.

Memorial Day Parade - The Strong and Coginchaug Bands marched in the Durham Memorial Day Parade. At the Town Green Military Ceremony following the parade, Coginchaug Band performed The Star Spangled Banner, 2 small groups of talented musician students sang God Bless America and performed TAPS.

- **The CRHS AP Computer Science** - Following the AP Exam the class cut, sewed, and stuffed heart pillows to donate to the palliative care unit at Middlesex Hospital.

- **CRHS Pep Band:** Led by longtime music director Tim Fisher, the Coginchaug Pep Band energized crowds all year with spirited performances. Their wide-ranging playlist, themed events, and annual Quinnipiac hockey game appearance made them a highlight of the school year.

- **CRHS Spring Band & Choir Concert** – A celebration of months of dedication, the spring concert featured a variety of musical styles and showcased the talent and growth of our young musicians.

- **CRHS Spring Art Show** – The art show featured exceptional work from talented high school artists, including photography, sculpture, and painting. This year, our art department was honored with the Judy Streeter Outstanding Art Department Award, presented to Mr. Ryan Bothamley.

- **Feeling Monsters-** a collaborative art project between Mrs. Longly's kindergarteners and Mr. Bothamley's art students. The kindergarteners drew colorful creatures to express how they feel inside, and the high school students recreated them using the fabric arts skills they learned!

- **CRHS Robotics team** - The Robodevils earned the THINK award at the Connecticut State Championships. The award honors teams that remove obstacles through creative thinking.

- **Honoring Durham and Middlefield Fire Departments** - CRHS presented the Connecticut Association of Schools Distinguished Friends of Education Award to the Durham and Middlefield Volunteer Fire Departments for their collaboration in our Fire Science Program.

- **CRHS Musical** – High School Musical – Students brought the beloved Disney production to life with energetic choreography, catchy songs, and engaging performances that delighted audiences of all ages.

- **Memorial School Art Show** – Families toured the halls filled with colorful artwork, highlighting the creativity and imagination of our elementary artists.

- **Brewster School Art Show & Book Fair** – PreK–Grade 1 families enjoyed an evening celebrating student artwork alongside browsing the spring Scholastic Book Fair, promoting both literacy and creativity.

- **John Lyman School Art Show** – This annual schoolwide celebration displayed projects from every student, turning the school into a vibrant gallery for one evening.

- **Kindergarten Frogs Make Me Hoppy Artist Residency** – A three-day art and puppetry program where students learned about frogs, their habitats, and survival methods, then created and animated their own puppets.

- **Author Visit at John Lyman** – local children's author Leslie Bullion inspired students with her storytelling process and insights into writing, sparking a love for literature.

- **Elementary School Concerts** – From Memorial's Fourth and Fifth Grade Band & Chorus to Lyman's Second & Third Grade performances, students showcased their developing musical skills to proud families

Spring 2025 Athletic Highlights

Girls Tennis: The Girls team had a great season of growth. Played in the qualifying round of the Class S Tournament against Lewis Mills. Avery Viens qualified and competed in the first round of State Open Invitational

Shoreline Tournament: #1 Singles Avery Viens (advanced to Semifinals) #2 Singles Sydney Ross

Doubles Teams: Emily Parmalee & Etta Funke, Frankie Augur & Elizabeth Putnam, Tea DiPietro & Abby Francis

Shoreline All Conference: Avery Viens (1st Team) Sydney Ross (Honorable Mention)

Boys Tennis: The Boys team had a large group of underclassmen who played with a lot of heart this season. With no graduating seniors the team is looking forward to a strong 25-26 season.

Shoreline Tournament: #1 Singles Gannon Remmilard (advanced to Quarterfinals)

Doubles Teams: Eric Marks & Levi Henderson Joshua Cronk & Ryan Stern, Ryan Legge & Charlie Scirroco

Shoreline All Conference: Gannon Remmilard (2nd Team) Josh Cronk and Ryan Stern (Honorable Mention)

Golf Team: 4th at Shorelines and 10th in the Division III Tournament. At States Jake Crocetto and Will Fournier led the Blue Devils with a 74 and 76. Keegan Stojak and Liam Fitzpatrick chipped in with a 91 and 93. Will and Jake also competed at the State Open at Mohegan Sun on June 13th

Shoreline All Conference: Will Fournier and Jake Crocetto (1st Team)

Softball: Played in the Shoreline semifinals and 2nd Round of the State Tournament.

Shoreline All Conference: Lilly Montgomery (1st Team) Emily Allen (2nd Team) Mackenzie Bearor (Honorable Mention)

Baseball: played in the 1st Round of Shorelines and 2nd Round of the State Tournament

Shoreline All Conference: Silas Barrett (1st Team), Matthew Yale (2nd Team), and Michael Wamester (Honorable Mention)

Outdoor Track:

13 School Records were broken in the 24-25 Season, 32 athletes competed in States, 13 athletes competed at the CT State Open meet, 4 athletes competed at New Englands and 6 athletes competed at Nationals!!

Class S State Championships:

Boys 300m State Champion Charlie Dalles

Girls 4x400m State Champions Aaliyah Watson, Estella Perez, Jane Waterman, and Sophie Farr

Girls 4x800m 3rd Boys 4x100m 3rd Boys 4x400m 2nd

Shot Put Ayden Osvald (3rd)

Boys 100m and 200m Jacob Kosienski (2nd)

Girls 200m Sophie Farr (2nd)

CT State Open: 300m Charlie Dalles (2nd) 4x400m James Parmelee, Skylar Kaczor, Liam Ullman, Charlie Dalles (5th)

New England Championships: Boys 4x4 (Skylar Kaczor, Liam Ulman, James Parmelee, and Charlie Dalles (6th) Charlie Dalles 300H (2nd). All received All New England Honors

Shoreline Honors: Sophie Farr (Shoreline Championship MVP) Charlie Dallas (Shoreline Championship MVP)

1st Team All Conference Charlie Dalles, Jacob Kosienski, John Parmelee, Carson DiNallo, Skylar Kaczor, Sophie Farr, Jane Waterman, Estella Perez, and Aaliyah Watson

2nd Team All Conference: Liam Ulman, James Parmelee Molly Kulas and Skayla Vazquez

Charlie Dalles, Jacob Kosienski and the Girls 4X400 Team were recognized at the CHSCA All-State Track Dinner.

Jake Crocetto and Will Fournier were honored at the CHSCA All State Boys Golf Dinner.

Sophie Farr & Alec Rodrigue received the CASCIAAC Scholar Athlete Award for excellence in academics and athletics.

Unified Sports – Students participated in multiple inclusive events, including bowling at Highland Bowl, attending a collegiate baseball game at Dunkin Park, and joining the ‘Choose to Include’ pep rally at Memorial School.

Strong School Softball and Baseball: Both teams had successful seasons working hard to improve their skills that will carry them to the next level of play in high school!

The Board would like to thank The Benchwarmers for their support to athletics. Since 2019 alone the organization has donated over \$140,000 in equipment, scholarships, and fees to enhance the experience of our student athletes.

Spring 2025 Classrooms and Beyond...

- **Senior Capstone Presentations** – Seniors at CRHS presented year-long projects to peers, staff, and community members, demonstrating critical thinking and real-world application of learning.
- **CRHS Academic Awards & Scholarship Night** – Students were honored for academic achievement, leadership, and dedication, with scholarships awarded by community organizations.
- **Math Olympiad** – Strong School's Math Olympiad Team was celebrated for problem-solving excellence, with one student ranking in the top 40% internationally.
- **Brewster Cereal Domino Event** - Brewster School collected 467 boxes of cereal this year! All cereal was donated to surrounding food banks by the Cub Scouts Troop 33.
- **Therapy Dog Visits**- Our schools had several visits from therapy dog Benny Massaro in early May. Students were so excited to spend time with him and Mrs Massaro plans to continue the partnership this year!
- **Arithmetickles Math Program** – An interactive math-themed assembly at Brewster and Lyman Schools combined comedy with learning, engaging both students and staff.
- **ThinkFirst Safety Presentation** – Strong School health classes learned life-saving strategies to prevent brain and spinal injuries from a survivor and medical professional.
- **Author & Motivational Speaker Visits** – Parker 'Basketball' Jones delivered a powerful anti-bullying message, while local author Leslie Bullion inspired young readers and writers.
- **International Travel** – 40 CRHS students and 6 staff explored France and Spain, immersing themselves in language, history, and culture.
- **ECO Club Visit to Memorial School** – High school environmental advocates taught elementary students about sustainability and environmental stewardship.
- **6th Grade Welcome** – Incoming 6th graders toured Strong School with the help of 8th grade ambassadors, meeting staff and learning about the daily schedule in a warm, welcoming environment.
- **6th Grade Scavenger Hunt** – A family event for incoming 6th graders to explore Strong School, meet teachers, and enjoy community-building activities.
- **Brewster Dance Festival** - Brewster School held two festivals. Family picnics were combined with the dance festivals for each grade level (Grades K + 1). The Dance Festival had the entire grade level perform then the whole school dance. A family picnic in the courtyard followed the Dance Festivals.



The District Dispatch

Upcoming Meetings.....

Board of Education Members

Maura Caramanello
Christine Cowan
Lindsay Dahlheimer
Linda Darcy
Stephen Delvecchio
John Mennone
Robert Moore
Lucy Petrella
James Roraback
Jason Stone

Board of Education Regular Meetings:

Library Media Center of CRHS
August 13, 2025
September 10, 2025
October 8, 2025
November 12, 2025
December 10, 2025

The public is welcome to attend
in person, remotely via Zoom, and
the District YouTube Channel:
<http://www.youtube.com/@RSD13Live>

BOE Committee Meetings:

In the Library/Media Center of CRHS	
August 20, 2025	Building Committee
August 20, 2025	Policy Committee
September 17, 2025	Policy Committee
September 24, 2025	Student Achievement Committee
October 15, 2025	Policy Committee
October 15, 2025	Building Committee
October 22, 2025	Student Achievement Committee
November 19, 2025	Policy Committee
November 19, 2025	Building Committee
December 17, 2025	Policy Committee
December 17, 2025	Building Committee

Meeting agendas and minutes can be found below on the district website

<https://www.rsd13ct.org/Our-District/Board-of-Education/Meeting-Agendas--Minutes/index.html>

Regional School District 13
Board of Education
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www.RSD13CT.org

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