

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 13
Board of Education

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Warm winter greetings to all!

As this seemingly endless winter trudges on, our dedicated administrators and staff at Regional School District 13 continue to collaborate on behalf of our students. They are working diligently to create an inclusive, relevant culture while driving continuous improvement in student achievement. The entire Board of Education also continues our work to provide advocacy and oversight in support of our 2014/15 District Goals.

At each Board of Education meeting we discuss different aspects of student achievement in order to clearly understand the initiatives underway that prepare our students for the future. This year each Board meeting includes a discussion of student achievement with focus not only on student outcomes, but also on such things as our efforts to monitor progress in student achievement, professional development for staff, improvements in safety and security within our schools, and the integration of technology in our classrooms. In September Dr. Linda Berry updated the Board on the use of formative and summative assessments. In October she provided us with a summary of the most recent CAPT and CMT scores in science as well as SAT/AP results at the high school. In November Dr. Veronesi and Principal Nancy Heckler led a discussion about the work of our elementary education teams, explaining the data team process and describing how the information gleaned in that process is used to differentiate instruction and customize student learning in the classroom. In November Principal Falcone provided an update on the school's progress toward the completion of NEASC recommendations and his game plan to address the longer term committee suggestions. Our January meeting included a presentation by technology teacher Bill Kurtz demonstrating the use of Chromebooks in our classrooms and updating the Board on the improvements being made to integrate new technology. One of the highlights at our Board meetings is hearing from Naomi Rinaldo and Jeremy Cannon, our student representatives to the Board who update us on what is happening at CRHS and making sure we are aware of the outstanding achievements of our hard working athletic teams. We appreciate the time our educators and student representatives have spent informing the Board of these important initiatives and achievements in our schools.

Our Board standing committees meet frequently to address the specific areas with which they are charged. The Student Achievement Committee has worked throughout the year to ensure that the Board is informed of our progress on Common Core curriculum development, further implementation of the Inform System and efforts to build a common vision for the future educational programming in our district. The Policy Committee has completed a review and update of all Board Policies and By-Laws. In addition to completing negotiations with our Administrators' Union, the Human Resources Committee is

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developing a Board of Education handbook to serve as a guide for new and existing Board members. The Educational Resources Committee has been very busy, reviewing the status of pension investments and guiding the transition to a new pension investment management firm. They have reviewed and approved the RSD13 annual financial statements, monitored expenditures versus the 2014/15 budget, recommended a project to renovate the Brewster School roof including a solar panel installation option and considered various financing options for future capital improvements.

The Utilization Committee continues its work on addressing the challenging issue of declining student enrollment. Actual enrollment is consistent with demographic projections, further reinforcing the importance of developing a more effective plan for the use of our school buildings and facilities. As has been communicated over the past several months, the Committee recommends a long term plan to convert to a four school configuration consisting of two K – 5 elementary schools, one middle school and the high school. The building mechanical, engineering and plumbing systems (MEP) review conducted as part of the DRA study has identified the condition of each building and has assisted the committee in recognizing the capital requirements expected over the next 5 to 10 years. The capital needs, combined with Brewster and Memorial additions and/or renovations will require financing. The Committee is evaluating a variety of financing options as well as the potential for state reimbursement grants in order to mitigate the net cost of these improvements and maximize the long term savings to our communities. Given the lead time necessary to obtain state building grants and the bond filing process, the Committee has decided to explore the possibility of a phased-in implementation. A review is currently underway to determine if, given the number of students anticipated for the 2016/17 school year, Korn School can be closed after the 2015/16 school year without the need for immediate or significant capital expenditures. If this approach is confirmed, the Committee will likely shift gears and begin to work on a detail transition and alternative building use plan for Korn School. The Utilization Committee anticipates delivering a report to the Board in the near future summarizing their findings, recommendations and next steps.

Dr. Veronesi presented her proposed budget for the 2015/16 school year at the February 11th meeting of the Board of Education. This budget proposal clearly reflects thoughtful efforts on the part of the Superintendent and Administrators to continue to strengthen our school system while being respectful of the economic impact the school budget has on our community. Please join us as we continue discussion of the budget proposal at our February 25th, March 4th and March 18th meetings. Regular scheduled Board of Education meetings are scheduled for March 11th and March 25th. (See the RSD13 website or your respective town websites for meeting postings.)

This is a transitional time in education, not only for our community but across our nation. We have a unique opportunity to take advantage of the best available world-wide thinking on educational

programming while leveraging our resources and focusing our investments in areas that are most beneficial to our students. I know that by working together, our dedicated Board and inspiring team of educators will create a progressive school system which will make us all feel proud and be one that we are happy to support and claim as our own. Thank you for being a part of this awesome school district!

Sincerely,

Kerrie Flanagan

Chair, RSD13 Board of Education