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Regional School District 13 **Board of Education** **November 12, 2025**

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the library Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board of Education Members Present: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone
Board of Education Members absent: Mr. DelVecchio, Mrs. Caramanello and Mrs. Cowan
Administration Present: Dr. Leggett, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, to approve the agenda with the amendment of adding a vote for a transfer of funds for completed capital projects.

All in favor of approving the agenda with the amendment of adding a vote for the transfer of funds for completed capital projects: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

Presentation and Recognition

A. CRHS Student Presentation

Students provided an update on sports, arts/music events, and school activities at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Jenny Zaclli provided an update on athletics, noting achievements for the cross-country and volleyball teams. Both the boys' and girls' cross-country teams competed in the Shoreline Conference Championships and both teams held their first pink event supporting breast cancer awareness. Additionally, the volleyball team worked on building positive team culture this season and hosted a "dig pink" game that raised over $1,700.00 in breast cancer awareness.

Kaylin Connell presented an update on soccer and football. The girls' soccer team finished the season with an 8–7–2 record. They advanced to the Shoreline quarterfinals and competed in the first round of States as the 14th seed, ultimately falling to 19th-seeded Stafford High School. The team demonstrated strong effort and passion throughout the season. The boys' soccer team ended with a 6–9–2 record and earned a spot in the Class S State Tournament. Seeded 26th, they traveled to face the No. 7 seed, Morgan. The season also featured a successful Teacher Appreciation Game, where teachers showed support by wearing player numbers during the match.

The football team is currently 2-5 in their fall season with three remaining games, including the senior game on Wednesday, November 26. The cheerleading team has supported the football team at all their games, with captains Taya DiPietro, Scotland Forbush, and Talia Rojas helping the team learn new routines and stunts. Students are looking forward to the upcoming powderpuff game on November 25.

Taryn Adams presented updates on music and upcoming events. Band and Chorus had their first concert on October 21 and the music department and Pops organized the craft fair held on November 8. CRHS students participated in the two-day Shoreline Music Festival. Upcoming music events include a show choir, acapella, and jazz band concert and musical auditions for The Little Mermaid with performances March 26-March 28. There will also be upcoming performances at the Thanksgiving football game on Wednesday and the holiday concert on December 16.

Jacob Almodovar presented the beginning of the year activities and upcoming events. Other successful events at the start of the school year were the carnival, annual senior sunrise outing, homecoming, and golf tournament. Students hosted their first Meet the Candidate night for residents to learn about prospective board of education members. Additionally, eighth grade students visited the high school to learn about extracurriculars and school programs.

More recently, students took the PSATs, the National Honor Society inducted over 20 students into its chapter, and there was a Veterans' Day Assembly to honor the men and women who serve our country. Students also attended the Junior Achievement Stock Market Challenge, with one CRHS team earning first place.

B. School of Distinction for Growth: High Need Learners in English Language Arts – Memorial School, RSD 13

Memorial was noted as a school of distinction for the 2024-2025 accountability measures from the state of Connecticut's Department of Education. The Board commended the hard work and efforts of everyone who made this possible, especially Mrs. Keane and Mrs. Durkin.

Additionally, Katie Trainer was selected as one of 10 administrators from CT public schools for a Day of Learning at Harvard, led by Dr. Miguel Cardona and his wife. This professional development included presentations from Dr. Cardona and the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools, in addition to round table discussions with other administrators and Harvard students who focused on how to make positive, impactful change in educational leadership.

C. Recognition of Board Member with 10 Years of Service

CABE honors board members who have 10 or more years of service. Dr. Leggett recognized Mr. Moore for his 10 years of service on the school board.

D. Recognition of Outgoing Board Members

Mrs. Dahlheimer and Mr. Mennone were recognized for their service to the board. The Regional School District 13 Board of Education formally recognized Mrs. Dahlheimer for her dedicated service since 2021, including four years as a board member and three years as chairperson. Additionally, the Regional School District 13 Board of Education formally recognized Mr. Mennone, who has also served since 2021. Both Mrs. Dahlheimer's and Mr. Mennone's leadership has resulted in major district accomplishments, such as the amendment to the Regional School District Plan enabling the creation of a single PreK–5 elementary school at Memorial School, the closing and repurposing of Brewster and John Lyman Schools, and the successful passage of a $76 million bond proposal. The Board expressed its gratitude to both Mrs. Dahlheimer and Mr. Mennone for their service and lasting contributions that will benefit the district for years to come.

E. Welcome to New Board Members

Mr. Moore welcomed the newly elected board members Mark Simmons and Nick Constantino in addition to the return of Christine Cowan.

F. CABE Board Leadership Recognition

Regional School District 13 Board of Education is going to be recognized for board level one leadership for school board work in the state of Connecticut. Regional School District 13 is 1 of 11 districts that received a Level I award. The award will be presented at a joint CABE and CAPS conference on Friday, November 21 presented by the Commissioner of Education.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Board of Education Minutes - October 8, 2025

Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to approve the October 8, 2025 minutes as presented.

All in favor of approving the October 8, 2025 meeting minutes as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Leggett congratulated Memorial School for their recognition as a CT School of Distinction for Growth in English Language Arts for their high needs population. She additionally commended the growth in Regional School District's 13 accountability rating from 76 to 80 for the 24-25 school year.

Dr. Leggett thanked Hayden O'Sullivan and Carson DiNallo for their work and efforts to make Candidates' Night a successful community event. Jenny Lucier, library media specialist, was recognized for her upcoming presentation at the CABE conference on best practices in 21st century libraries. Mrs.

Murray, principal at Brewster school, was also thanked for her presentation on play-based learning at the Student Achievement meeting. The team from Brewster will present play-based learning in Hartford. Lastly, Dr. Leggett thanked Dr. Siegel for the work that was done to make November 4 a successful professional learning day.

Dr. Leggett also reported on updates and ongoing business. Five focus groups have been conducted so far on the portrait of a graduate, and the portrait of a graduate and strategic plan survey will go out to the entire community prior to Thanksgiving. In terms of restorative practices and core ethical values, this is the month of kindness. Dr. Leggett reminded the board to complete the kindness survey that was sent out at the beginning of the year. The report concluded with the announcement of an in-person meeting on November 19 to discuss fundraising and clarify the policy. Additionally, the Board was reminded to complete Know Before Training for safety and security.

Chairman's Update

A. Review and Possible Vote on Board of Education Goals and Objectives

Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to approve the Board of Education Goals and Objectives as presented.

All in favor of approving the Board of Education's Goals and Objectives as presented: *Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.*

B. District Events

Mr. Moore and the board members commended the students again on their excellence organizing Candidates' Night. Mr. Moore also recognized student efforts in the National Honor Society induction and the participation in the Veteran programs.

Staff Report – Director Finance

Mrs. Neubig reported the district is 28.5% expended as of the end of October. 97.5% of the budget has been encumbered. The district has received 32% of their revenue.

Mrs. Neubig recommended the transfer of funds from completed projects from the Capital Reserve into the General Fund for the 24/25 fiscal year.

Fire pump for the sprinkler system-$140,775.92
Picket Lane culvert-$588,711.43

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stone, to transfer the funds from the Capital Reserve into the General Fund for the 24/25 fiscal year.

All in favor of transferring the funds from the Capital Reserve into the General Fund for the 24/25 fiscal year: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

Update on Memorial Project – Angela Cahill, Owners Project Manager

Dr. Leggett introduced Ms. Cahill, owner's project manager for the Memorial Project.

Ms. Cahill identified STV's responsibilities, which include attending all building committee meetings, monitoring design and construction progress, coordinating required paperwork and approvals, and facilitating communication with the state Office of Grants Administration to support reimbursement and audit requirements.

Ms. Cahill then discussed the design phases and updates**.** The project consists of five phases: current focus is on Phase 2 (demolition and hazmat) and Phase 3 (major construction). Design development drawings and cost estimates for Phase 3 have been completed and approved. Construction documents are now being prepared, and local approvals (planning & zoning, building, fire marshal, health, ADA) are underway. A special local approval meeting is expected on November 24. State reviews—including traffic and well/septic—are progressing. Phase 2 drawings are already submitted for local approval, and a combined Building Committee/Board of Education meeting is anticipated the week of December 1 to secure signatures.

The project remains on budget. The OPM and Building Committee worked through an extensive value management process to preserve educational quality while identifying cost savings. Some items will be included as potential add alternates if bids come in favorably. To reduce cost and align with the district's preferred roofing system, the new gym and new academic wing roofs will shift from barrel vaults/pitched roofs to flat roofs. The change preserves educational spaces and provides long-term maintenance advantages.

The board and committee members expressed appreciation for the OPM's work and the clarity of the updates.

Board Communications and Professional Development

Mr. Moore and Dr. Leggett have responded to concerns regarding financing, fundraising, and social media/Facebook activities. Board members also discussed the upcoming CAPSS/CABE convention.

New Business

A. Vote to Accept Merwin Fund Grants

Dr. Leggett wrote a grant proposal on behalf of the district to have a PR expert work with the social media club at the high school to develop a social media presence for the district. The club, led by a faculty advisor, will create guidelines and analyze social media platforms to use, posting timelines, and content. The grant stipends, $1,000.00 each, would go to the faculty advisor and the PR expert.

The other grant proposal, for $2,500.00 would support Erica Fisher's initiative for library materials for student projects, social activities, and other student enrichment, a "library of things".

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Dr. Darcy, to accept the grant proposals of $2,000.00 and $2,500.00 as presented.

All in favor of accepting the grant proposals of $2,000.00 and $2,500.00 as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

B. Vote to Accept Proposed 2026 Board of Education and Committee Meeting Schedule

Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to accept the proposed 2026 Board of Education and Committee Meeting schedule.

All in favor of accepting the proposed 2026 Board of Education and Committee Meeting schedule as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

C. Vote to Accept Community Committee Appointments

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, to accept Philip Dwire for the Building Committee.

All in favor of accepting Philip Dwire for the Building Committee: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stone, to approve Charlie Dallas as a student representative on the Building Committee.

All in favor of approving Charlie Dallas as a student representative on the Building Committee: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Dr. Darcy, to approve Kristen Allen and Maureen Hamilton for the Student Achievement Committee.

All in favor of approving Kristen Allen and Maureen Hamilton for the Student Achievement Committee: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve Peter Larsen and Jennifer Almodovar for the District Climate Committee.

All in favor of approving Peter Larsen and Jennifer Almodovar for the District Climate Committee: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

D. Possible Dates for Joint Board of Education/Board of Selectmen Meeting

The Board discussed December 10 at 5:00 as the joint Board of Education/Board of Selectmen Meeting.

E. Policy Review

1. First read on below policies
    a. Curriculum 6140
    b. Graduation 5127
    c. Orientation of Board Members 9230
    d. School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees - Shipman
        - Administrative Regulations Regarding School Volunteers - Shipman
    e. Visitors and Observations in Schools - Shipman

The Board conducted first reads on several updated policies. Policy 6140 was revised to emphasize rigorous curriculum development, aligning all work with the district's curriculum handbook and supporting a dynamic, continuously improving curriculum. The Board also reviewed updated graduation requirements, reflecting the state's change from 26 to 25 required credits, and confirmed that the existing 0.5 credit awarded for advisory participation remains in place.

Additional first reads included updates to Board member orientation, now requiring (rather than recommending) new members to attend a workshop at district expense with proof submitted within 90 days. The Board also examined a new policy on school volunteers, interns, and visitors, establishing clearer requirements for background checks depending on whether volunteers work under employee supervision or independently, such as on field trips. The policy also outlines expectations for visitor procedures and compliance with state guidelines when interacting with federal immigration or law enforcement officials.

2. Second read and possible vote on below policies
    a. Board of Education Code of Ethics 9271
    b. Committees 9130
        - Committee Guidelines
    c. Community Member Committee Participation 9110
    d. Restorative Practices - Shipman
    e. Time, Place and Notice of Meetings 9321
    f. Use of Private Technology Devices by Students 5130

The Board reviewed updated practices carried over from Shipman, primarily simplifying language so that certain actions could occur at board meetings without specifying time requirements. They also updated the policy on student use of private technology, clarifying that students are not allowed to use personal phones or devices during instructional time. In addition, the policy reinforces that the district's IT department has the authority to monitor student activity when those devices are connected to the school network.

Mr. Mennone made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to accept the proposed policies as presented.

All in favor of accepting the proposed policies as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

A. Building Committee & BOE Special Joint Meeting - October 8, 2025
B. Policy Committee Meeting - October 15, 2025
C. Building Committee Meeting - October 15, 2025
D. Student Achievement Committee Meeting – November 5, 2025
E. Building Committee Meeting – November 5, 2025

The Building Committee reviewed detailed 3D designs of the new school, focusing heavily on cafeteria layout, color schemes, exterior compatibility, parking, roofing decisions, and cost-saving opportunities. They noted progress on swing-space tasks, remaining punch-list items, gym curtain alternatives, mechanical and electrical planning—including the need to order long-lead generator equipment—and the issuance of a $20 million bond anticipation note to cover project expenses. The Policy Committee discussed and adopted several policies, while the Building Committee confirmed its meeting schedule going forward.

The Student Achievement Committee highlighted the in-depth presentation on play-based learning at Brewster, encouraging board members to visit the school to experience the learning in action. Updates included growth in the district's multilingual learner program, which now serves 23 students, possibly necessitating an assistant. The committee also reviewed a proposed new high school elective—Spanish Through Cultural Cooking—planned for fall 2026, with scheduling details still under discussion. Baseline student data and improved accountability scores were noted, and further review is planned for February.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Mr. Mennone made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Stone. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio