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Regional School District 13 Board of Education November 11, 2026
Finance Committee

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Finance Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, November 11, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug High School.

Finance Committee Members Present: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Moore, Mr. Viens, Mr. Simmons, Mrs. Buckheit (attending virtually), Mr. Castro and Mrs. Opalacz (arrived at 5:15pm)
Finance Committee Members Absent: Mr. Konstantino, Mr. Neidhardt
Board of Education Members Present: Mrs. Petrella
Administration Present: Dr. Leggett, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance
Board of Finance Members in Attendance: Mr. Muzio, Durham

Mrs. Cowan called the meeting to order at 5:02 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Viens made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the agenda.

All in favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Moore, Mr. Viens, Mr. Simmons, Mrs. Buckheit, and Mr. Castro. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes – September 16, 2026

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Viens, to approve the September 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes as presented.

All in favor of approving the September 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes as presented:
Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Moore, Mr. Viens, Mr. Simmons, Mrs. Buckheit, and Mr. Castro. Motion passed.

Update on Towns' and District 13 Budget Considerations for 2027-2028

Mrs. Neubig presented a budget overview to the committee, reporting that the 2027–28 budget is still in early planning, with town allocations based on October 1 enrollment and a five-year average. The current allocations are 65.76% for Durham and 34.24% for Middlefield. Expected costs include contractual salary increases, a preliminary 11.5% health-insurance increase, contract rate for transportation services, and

new debt service for Three Oaks Memorial, while building consolidation to reduce operating expenses. Mrs. Neubig reported that the district always reviews spending closely, and committee members noted that capital-reserve 2% limit makes it difficult to save enough for major repairs, such as upcoming school roofs. The committee also discussed changing enrollment and costs in the MTA transition program, as more districts develop their own programs and state requirements extend services through age 22. Committee members said the MTA transition program benefits from its Wesleyan campus location, which gives students access to varied local work experiences and community connections.

District and town representatives described ongoing advocacy for increased state education and special-education funding through legislative groups, meetings, and testimony. Consolidating the elementary schools will eliminate the issue of having siblings riding different buses due to different locations, as K-5 will all go to TOMS. Dattco is planning the routes now to determine if this can reduce any buses, but it is still too early to report on that. Dr. Leggett also discussed long bus rides and crowded pickup lines, noting that route length, safety rules, and individual student needs limit how much routes and stops can be changed. In district busing costs roughly 2 million per year including the cost of bus lease, daily bus routes, operating and maintaining the fleet and mandated bus transportation to Vinyl, VoAg and IDS. This amount does not include out of district transportation.

Committee members emphasized that clear communication is needed about expected savings from school consolidation. While operating expenses are reduced, other areas increased as expected, such as health insurance, property insurance, and labor costs. These expected factors prohibit a large budget reduction but mitigates an overall budget amid rising expenses. The district is researching legal and deed restrictions for Brewster and Lyman schools, with public discussions expected by January. Proceeds from any sale are allocated based on the current allocation rates at the time of sale. The proceeds may also be used to pay a lump sum off the debt service for Three Oaks Memorial School. The committee plans to revisit the budget with updated figures in early March.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

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

All in favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Moore, Mr. Viens, Mr. Simmons, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Opalacz and Mr. Castro. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio