

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Regular Board of Education Meeting

September 2, 2020

Board Present: Diane Linderman, Chair; Martha Shoemaker, Vice Chair; Steven Wilson, Secretary; Stacey Leonardo; Jennifer Miller; Mary Powell St. Louis; Suzanne Thompson

Present Via Telephone: Jean Wilczynski

Absent by Previous Arrangement: Rick Goulding

Administration Present: Ian Neviasher, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Cavalieri, Principal of Lyme Consolidated School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School; Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Ron Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

Others Present: Isabella Hine and Ellery Zrenda, High School Student Representatives

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairwoman Linderman. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Dr. Powell St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Miller, to approve the minutes of August 12, 2020 as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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III. Visitors

1. Public Comment

Diane Linderman, Board Chair, read the following statement from Olivia Hersant, Co-President of the Region 18 Teachers' Association:

I'm reaching out to you ahead of this evening's BOE meeting to give you some feedback from Middle School teachers concerning our return to in-person learning in hopes that you'd read the statement to the rest of the Board.

Over the last several weeks, and indeed over the summer, we have seen and heard teachers from other districts discussing going back to school. From the start, I knew we were ahead of the curve for everything from teacher, student, and community engagement to safety protocols. While everyone's emotions over this situation have been heightened, our Admin team, BOE, parents, and fellow LOL teachers have risen to the occasion. When other districts are beginning to manage hybrid learning with varying degrees of success, we have been able to begin live and in person. We are excited and happy to be back in school with our students!

Teachers at the Middle School are feeling safe with everyone adhering to mask wearing. We feel confident when our dedicated custodial staff throughout the day are wiping down surfaces. We even appreciate seeing the cleaning schedule in the bathrooms! By including teachers in all parts of the reopening, listening and responding to our concerns, and letting us wear our own masks, Administration has shown us that they are truly working with us.

We hear teachers in other districts, we live in other districts, and we know that LOL has done it right. No day one is perfect, but this year, our day one was pretty close to it because it felt like business as usual- which these days isn't always easy to come by! We will gladly take the technical glitches because we're back in school with our kids and they're as happy as we are to be back.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

*Olivia Hersant
RETA Co-President*

2. Report from Student Representatives

Isabella Hine and Ellery Zrenda reported on the following activities taking place at the schools:

At LOLHS: After months of preparation, teachers and students are back in the classroom. On August 31, Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal, and the student advisory group conducted a freshmen orientation. In small groups, 9th graders toured the building and took part in a panel discussion with some upper classmen. Later that evening, Ms. Manfredi and Tracy Lenz, Director of Guidance, held a Zoom orientation for the 9th grade parents. On September 1, James Wygonik, Principal, conducted a Zoom

meeting with the students to review the physical distancing and safety protocols that have been implanted in the building. Classes took mask breaks outside throughout the day. All students received their new Chromebooks on September 2.

At LOLMS: The middle school is off to a great start. We are so happy to have our students back with us. On Monday, August 31, we welcomed the 6th graders in eight different cohorts for orientation and tours. The first day of school brought welcomed smiles and excitement from both students and staff. Additionally, remote learning students had an opportunity to have a meet and greet with their new teachers via Zoom. The middle school is taking an Instruct, Train, Reinforce, and Remind approach to safety practices. Students observed a safety video outlining new protocols as well as plans for ongoing trainings. All students received their Chromebooks on September 2 and are ready to hit the ground running.

At Mile Creek School and Lyme Consolidated School: The first day at Lyme Consolidated School and Mile Creek was very successful. The students were very excited to be back in the building after five and a half months of being home. Staff was eager to return to their classroom environment. Teachers introduced all of the new safety protocols that are in place with their students. Without having a dress rehearsal for arrival and dismissal, we knew it was going to be a challenge. We made it through with the cooperation from parents and the support from staff. We had over 100 parents at Lyme School, and 165 at Mile Creek dropping off and picking up their children. During arrival at Lyme School, there are now four adults unloading four cars at a time, and at Mile Creek there are five adults unloading five cars at a time, allowing for a better flow of traffic compared to the first day. We will make a few adjustments for dismissal to improve the amount of time it takes to make the exchange of custody. The Lyme and Mile Creek staffs would like to thank Facilities Director, Ron Turner, and his staff for having the building super clean and looking fantastic.

In the Preschool Program: The PreK numbers grew during the summer, and Center School is filled with more activity as we begin the 2020-2021 school year. The youngest Wildcats set a great example for all students in the district. They came in with their masks on and what fun it was to see the mask patterns of trains, kittens and minions, just to name a few. The PreK staff joined the “Superheroes Wear Masks Campaign” and provided pictures of themselves in masks for the students to see when they entered the building on the first day. Thanks to all the parents for the support and practice with mask wearing. Students used their new desk shields to take mask breaks and eat snacks and lunch. There was time for outdoor play and specials classes began on the first day. The PreK teachers are excited to be back in the classroom singing, teaching and, of course, washing hands. The theme of the month is all about me and families. Students will be using apples to weigh and measure during math activities. They will be learning about school routines and making new friends. PreK wishes everyone a safe and healthy school year. Go Wildcat Cubs!!

IV. Administrative Reports

1. Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Neviasher reviewed the September personnel report which reflected numerous new hires. Vacancies yet to be filled include instructional assistants, a transition and school to career coordinator and a part-time school psychologist.

Mr. Neviasher reviewed the September enrollment report which reflected a total in-house enrollment of 1,281 students, a decrease of 22 students from June 2020. To be noted: June senior class of 2020 – those exiting numbered 127 students; incoming fall kindergarten class is numbered at 77; a differential of 50.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the opening of the 2020-2021 school year including new reopening procedures and practices. The first day went smoothly with some traffic delays on Lyme Street; traffic already subsiding on day two, and alternate plans are being considered should it continue. The state and local police are working on traffic light timing to help ease traffic. There is the possibility of getting permission to use the gate access through the Lyme Academy property to assist with arrivals/departures.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the district's annual Convocation which took place on August 24 via Zoom. Jonathan Goss, Tech Ed Teacher at LOLHS, and Ray Belval, Campus Security, were honored as the Teacher of the Year and Employee of the Year respectively. They will be recognized at the October Board meeting.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the resources for families and educators found on the district website at <https://www.region18.org/parents/reopening-school-fall-2020> related to the reopening of schools and COVID-19.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the childcare that is being provided for the Lyme-Old Lyme staff who live out of town and whose children are attending schools opting for a hybrid or remote learning experience. He gave the stats on ages of children attending and numbers attending. The staff has been very appreciative of this initiative.

Mr. Neviasher reported that mask wearing by the students has not been an issue. The district did purchase clear masks for the staff but they have not worked out as planned (easily fog up). Other options are being considered.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the lack of usage of the buses by the students; the district may encourage more usage as weeks go by as there seems to be plenty of space on the buses for social distancing.

Mr. Neviasher cited several technology improvements being utilized in the classrooms for remote learners. Mr. Neviasher also reported on improved personal protective equipment being used: i.e., two sinks installed in high school cafeteria so students can wash up before and after lunch, and desk shields being utilized at the elementary level for those students eating lunch in the classroom.

Mr. Neviaser reported on the commencement of the fall sports programs with the exception of football and volleyball. The CIAC and DPH are still discussing the status of these two sports.

Mr. Neviaser reported on the utilization of outdoor spaces for instruction and mask breaks weather permitting.

Mr. Neviaser reported that students and teachers are adapting well to being back in the buildings with flexibility being key.

Mrs. Linderman inquired about seat assignment on the buses especially when students are new to ridership. Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School, explained the process for dismissal with students last to get off the bus being put on the bus first. The elementary principals are tracking who is riding the bus for continual improvement to the process.

Mrs. Linderman reported on a CABA presentation on HVAC improvements to school buildings. These presentations are recorded so she encouraged Board members to view at their convenience. Follow-up discussion centered on how the district evaluates and measures ventilation and how clean the air is in the school buildings.

Mrs. Thompson voiced appreciation of the mask breaks at the high school, especially since classes at this level are longer than normal. Mrs. Leonardo noted the positive experience her child has had at Lyme Consolidated School.

Mrs. Wilczynski referred to a recent article in *The Day* re: shortage of bus drivers. Mr. Neviaser reported on the good standing they have with M&J Transportation due to Region 18 honoring the transportation contract when schools closed last year. Mr. Neviaser voiced his confidence that Lyme-Old Lyme would be a priority on bus runs.

2. Business Manager's Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of August 31, 2020. Fluctuations of note: The year over year differential is more significant than typical but can be attributed to the higher than usual August debt service payment. The increase in this payment was a result of the bond refunding done last year. Even though last month it was reported that special education spending was higher year over year, it has changed significantly for this month. When we are so early in the year, the differentials are a tough comparison because all are dependent upon when invoices arrive and encumbrances are made.

Year To Date Revenue Report

	2019-2020 Received	2020-2021 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,556,679	\$4,092,215
Town of Lyme	\$6,579,421	\$946,866

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report. No monies have been expended and the balance remains at \$200,000.

Mrs. McCalla reported, as previously communicated via email, the state has granted the district over \$300,000 to assist in offsetting COVID-19 costs. The Business Office is waiting on FEMA's final determination on what will and will not be covered as their commitment to reimburse 75% of cleaners and PPE seems to have been rescinded. Mrs. Wilczynski asked if these monies would be given to the towns and not the district. Mrs. McCalla reported that it was her understanding that the monies will be treated as a grant (vs. FEMA reimbursement).

V. Educational Presentation

There was no educational presentation scheduled.

VI. Chairman & Board Report

Mrs. Linderman encouraged the Board members to utilize educational opportunities offered by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and the State Department of Education's site on the latest addendums to *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together*.

VII. New Business

1. Approval of Tuition Students at Mile Creek School and Lyme Consolidated School

The request for a tuition student at Lyme Consolidated School was withdrawn.

Mr. Neviasser reported on a request for a tuition student at Mile Creek School (3rd grade). There is room for this student, and the family has met with Principal Kelly Enoch.

MOTION: Dr. Powell St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the tuition student request as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

VIII. Old Business

1. Goals for 2020-2021

Goals had been updated based on input from the Board of Ed at last month's meeting.

Curriculum

Provide a rigorous educational experience for students, in all modes of instruction (remote or in-person), that is in alignment with the high standards and expectations of the communities we serve.

Human Resources

Provide additional support for staff to ensure existing and new employees have the resources necessary to perform the duties of their jobs at the highest level possible.

Community

Support the social emotional needs of students and staff, with emphasis on self-care and community responsibility during this time of uncertainty.

Facilities

Monitor and evaluate five-year facility, safety, and technology plans to ensure appropriate improvements and maintenance of buildings, grounds, and infrastructure in line with recommendations from the DPH and the CSDE.

Board of Education

Provide resources to support students and staff through a variety of different means during this time of uncertainty.

MOTION: Mrs. Thompson made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Miller, to approve the 2020-2021 District Goals as presented.

The Board and Superintendent discussed how unique the goals are this year due to the pandemic.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

2. Closing of LOLHS Project

The district is still waiting for the final change order from the State so there is no action required on this agenda item.

3. Report of Committees:

- a. *Facilities*. The turf field forum, which was scheduled for next week, has been postponed. This forum will probably be moved to sometime in October as the community is more focused on other matters related to the pandemic at this time.
- b. *Finance*. No report.
- c. *Communications*. No report.
- d. *Policy*. No report.
- e. *LEARN*. No report.
- f. *LOL Prevention Coalition*. No report.
- g. *Sustainability*. Mrs. Miller reported that the next meeting of this group will take place on September 22. The committee is currently discussing new ideas for Board approval in October.

IX. Correspondence

Mrs. Linderman reported on the receipt of an anonymous letter related to offering an early retirement package to staff. The Board does not normally respond to anonymous letters, but Mrs. Linderman noted that these matters are discussed at the time of the budget development.

X. Executive Session

Mrs. Leonardo made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Miller, to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing litigation issues. Mr. Neviasser and Mrs. Dougherty were invited to attend the executive session.

XI. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned upon a motion by Mrs. Leonardo and a second by Mr. Wilson at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Wilson, Secretary