

Summary of December 2020 Board of Education Meetings

2020-2021 School Year:

Superintendent Hageman reported that the State Board of Education gave school districts the option to use remote learning in place of weather-related school cancellations. After careful consideration, Dr. Hageman decided that RSD17 would keep the first four inclement weather days as “snow days” to be made up in June. If there are more than four, the Superintendent will consider using the state flexibility and will communicate the plan to the District.

District Operating Budget Update

Finance Committee Chair, Eileen Blewett, updated the Board on the District’s 2020-2021 Operating Budget, including Covid related expenses to date. This fall, the District received two Covid relief grants: the CARES Relief Fund for \$219,740, and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Grant for \$45,545. Additionally there were Covid related savings in District transportation this summer. As of December, Covid related expenditures had been negated by the grants and Covid specific savings, however this mid-year review noted that pandemic expenses will continue to add up. Outside of Covid related expenses the Finance Committee reported the Special Education and Health Insurance lines were both over budget. Additional investments in paraprofessionals, an interventionist and additional chromebooks for the students have been added to the budget this year. As of December, the Finance Committee estimates the District will end the year in a positive position and plans another update to the Board in February.

Student Services Continuous Improvement Plan

Director of Student Services, Dr. Kris Lindsay-Stevens reported the Continuous Improvement Plan for Student Services to the Board which included three goals for this school year. This year the goal for student mental wellness focused on grades 6-12 with plans to select a social, emotional, behavioral screening system and curriculum. Dr. Lindsay-Stevens reported that Effective School Solutions (ESS) has been a positive experience for our district by supporting students with identified special education needs, and in some cases preventing out-placement. The second goal to improve the provision of nursing services to our students will start with a nursing audit of our district health offices to keep practices and protocols between schools more consistent. Student Services’ final goal is to continue to improve the preschool program by increasing opportunities for students who need extended day services and finding ways to increase enrollment of typical peers to a 50-50 ratio.

Sand Storage

The Facilities Committee recommended, and the Board agreed, to stop relying on Haddam for sand during snow storms. Haddam’s decision to change their surface treatment as well as complications of access to the facility for the District’s maintenance crew precipitated the decision to become self reliant. The district will use \$14,443.82 from the Capital Fund to build a shelter for the sand. Equipment which is currently stored outside can be put inside this structure when winter sand is not present.

Website:

You can watch the Finance Committee’s report at the December 15th Board of Education meeting on our RSD17.org website under District -> Board of Education -> BOE Meetings and Schedules -> Board of Education.