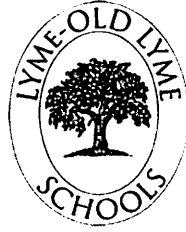


LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Regular Board of Education Meeting

June 7, 2023

Board Present: Steven Wilson, Chair; Mary Powell St. Louis, Vice Chair; Christopher Staab, Treasurer; Suzanne Thompson, Secretary; Laura Dean-Frazier; Anna James; Jason Kemp; Jennifer Miller

Absent by Previous Arrangement: Martha Shoemaker

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

Others Present: Chloe Datum, High School Student Representative; six community members from LOL

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Steven Wilson. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Consent Agenda

Mr. Neviaser explained the reasoning behind using a consent agenda which groups routine meeting discussion points into a single agenda item. In doing so, the grouped items can be approved in one action, rather than through the filing of multiple motions.

Because Dr. Powell St. Louis wanted to make corrections to the minutes, this item was pulled from the consent agenda.

Approval of Minutes (District Budget Meeting of May 1, 2023; Regular Meeting and Executive Session of May 3, 2023)

49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371

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Dr. Powell St. Louis asked that one correction be made to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 3, 2023. Specifically, on page 6, she asked that it be noted that she and Steve Wilson also attended the CABA Webinar: *As Book Bans Escalate, Here's What You Need to Know*.

MOTION: Dr. Powell St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Staab, to approve the minutes of the District Budget Meeting of May 1, 2023; the Regular Meeting of May 3, 2023 (as amended); and the Executive Session of May 3, 2023.

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

MOTION: Mr. Kemp made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Dean-Frazier, to approve the consent agenda which included the following items:

- Participation in State and Federal Grants
To authorize the Superintendent of Schools to apply for, receive and otherwise act as the legal representative of Regional School District No. 18 in connection with the following State and Federal Grants along with any other grants he deems appropriate:
Adult Education
Handicapped Preschool Incentive – Section 619 Education of the Handicapped Act
National School Lunch Program
Open Choice Attendance
Title I Improving Basic Programs
Title II Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting
Title VI Part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act PL 94-142
Carl D. Perkins
School Transportation
Science and Technology
Investing and Personal Finance
- Superintendent Appointment of Designee(s) per Policy 2131.1
To designate Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum, and Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services, as the designees to act in the absence of the Superintendent per Policy 2131.1.
- Leave of Absence Request
To approve the childrearing leave request of Laura Ventres of June 12-14, 2023.
- Food Service Management Contract
To approve the food service management contract between Region 18 and Chartwells for the 2023-2024 school year.
And
that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from

reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups. Also, the Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1. The sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend. 2. The sale is at the location of the event. 3. The food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

- Textbook Proposals for AP Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology, and AP American History
To approve the textbook selections for AP Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology, and AP American History

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

III. Visitors

1. Girls Tennis Team – State Champions

Lauren Rahr, coach of the LOLHS girls tennis team, and several members of the team were present at the meeting so that the Board could recognize them for winning the state championship title. Of note, this is the third year in a row that the LOLHS girls tennis team has won the state title as well as the shoreline title.

2. LOL Lions Club Presentation of Scholarships

There were no representatives from the Lions Club in attendance at the June Board meeting so this presentation did not take place.

3. CAFE Student Leadership Awards

Each year, CAFE invites its member Boards to recognize outstanding student leaders at the middle and high school levels. The principals of each school are asked to facilitate the selection of the students based on a given set of criteria. Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of LOLMS, and Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School, spoke to the many accomplishments of these students.

From Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School: Amirah D'Lizarraga

From Lyme-Old Lyme High School: Madeleine Morgado (not in attendance) and Alexander Chrysoulakis

4. CAPSS Student Recognition

William Barry and Mary Surprenant, LOLHS seniors, were recognized for being selected as the recipients of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendent's Award. This certificate of excellence is awarded to high school students for their leadership, service to the school, academic prowess relative to ability and service to others in the community. William and Mary were unable to attend the meeting due to the senior car parade also taking place this same evening, but the administration will present the certificates to the students.

5. Recognition of Retirees

The following staff members, who are retiring in June, were recognized by the Board for their years of service to the district: Kathleen Hancock, Elementary Teacher at Mile Creek School, 31 years of service
Gary Inglis, Campus Security at Lyme School, 5 years of service
Colleen Rodriguez, School Counselor at LOLHS, 23 years of service (retiring October 2023)
Melissa Walden, Technology Facilitator at Lyme School, 4 years of service
Lucy Walter, Science Teacher at LOLHS, 20 years of service

6. Report from Student Representatives

Chloe Datum reported on the following activities taking place at the schools:

At LOLHS: As the final days of school approach, we've seen the current class of seniors, the class of 2023, ushered out, while the new class, the class of 2027, enters into the school with events such as Eighth Grade Orientation day occurring this past month. Seniors have been able to enjoy the senior banquet, senior trip to Six Flags, and the senior car parade as a means of socializing before the conclusion of their school year. Graduation takes place on June 8. As we congratulate them, we also are seeing the conclusion of spring sports as we acknowledged the athletes and their coaches this past weekend at the spring sports banquet. A special recognition to the girls tennis team who won the state championship as well as to the track team that will see multiple runners compete at the New England and national level of competition.

At LOLMS: The end of the year has been extremely busy. Many art students' work was displayed at the Lyme Academy in May's community art show. Both the band and chorus held their final concerts of the year. All grades completed the SBAC testing, while the 8th grade additionally tackled the NGSS science assessment. Spring sports teams finished up the season with great success. Two 7th grade students won first place in the State of Connecticut History Day competition. Charlie McEwen and Liam McCormick will compete in the National History Day competition in Baltimore. On May 30, the middle school hosted the 5th grade orientation, while the 8th graders made their way to the high school for their orientation called Eighth Grade Orientation or EGO day. The middle school students are looking forward to field day this Friday, which includes a visit from an ice cream trailer. The 8th grade students are finishing up their time at the middle school with several exciting events, including the lock-in, which was held at the high school this year, and their field trip to Ocean Beach. All are excited for 8th grade promotion, which will be held next Wednesday, June 14.

Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School is proud to wrap up its school year with exciting news. LOLMS was named the 2023 Middle School of the Year for the State of Connecticut by the Connecticut Association of Schools. A special thanks to Assistant Principal Noah Ventola for authoring the application and school report. A small group of teachers, administrators, and students attended a proclamation ceremony last week at the Capitol Building in Hartford where Representative Devin Carney recognized the middle school and its many accomplishments. This is an amazing recognition and truly highlights our students, parents, faculty, Board of Education, and entire community and their support of our school, its programming, and its focus on educating the whole child.

At Mile Creek School and Lyme Consolidated School: The month of May flew by at the elementary schools as the students completed SBAC testing, held many of the meetings that prepare us for next school year, and enjoyed some of the culminating activities that celebrate the fifth graders before they move on to the middle school. The fifth graders spent most of a day visiting the middle school where they were able to meet teachers, tour the school, and eat lunch together in the cafeteria.

At Lyme Consolidated School, students enjoyed many field trips including trips to Dennison Pequotsepos Nature Center for kindergarten and second grade, and a fun day at Hammonasset Beach State Park for the fifth graders. Yesterday, the kindergarten through grade 2 students and staff dressed as pirates and spent the morning doing pirate math activities, which led them to hidden treasure in Captain Hine's office. The fifth graders made puppets of their favorite book characters and took their show on the road to visit classrooms around school and share their excitement for reading.

At Mile Creek School, the kindergarten students went on field trips to the Roger Williams Zoo and to White Sands Beach. Grades 3 and 5 enjoyed field trips to the Mystic Seaport, while Grade 4 traveled to the Connecticut Science Center. Joe Furey from Channel 8 News will be visiting the fourth grade students on Thursday. Last week we had a school-wide assembly to launch the summer reading program. This week spirit days will be held, including tie dye t-shirt day, summer fun day, and dressing in grade level colors. Field day will be held on Friday, as will the fifth grade picnic and the second grade celebration of writing. The fifth grade promotion ceremony will be held on Tuesday morning.

In the Preschool Program: This month we finished the study of dinosaurs by learning about herbivores, including the triceratops and the stegosaurus. We wrote about these dinosaurs in our journals, and we created artistic representations of herbivores in our art centers. In math, we began our 20-chain link countdown to the end of the year. Each day we cut off a link – we only have 5 links left. In literacy, we are reviewing the upper and lower case letters and their sounds. To celebrate finishing the alphabet, we brought in food that began with the same letter as our names, and we had a picnic so that we could share our namesake foods with our friends. We are looking forward to our end-of-year celebration on Friday during which all of our families will come to Center School for a ceremony. We want to thank the Board of Education for a fantastic year, and we hope everyone has a wonderful summer.

7. Public Comment

Sheryl Shyloski spoke to the importance of maintaining class size guidelines and having balanced gender distribution within the classrooms.

Mary Seidner, Executive Director of LYSB, read the following statement regarding concerns raised over data collection by LYSB at the high school field day event.

I am Mary Seidner, Executive Director of the Lymes' Youth Service Bureau, and I am back for a second month in a row at a Board of Education meeting. I want to thank you again for honoring LYSB as the "Friend of Education" in recognition of our longstanding partnership with Lyme-Old Lyme Schools.

Tonight, I want to address some concerns that have been raised regarding an event that LYSB held two weeks ago in conjunction with the high school field day. LYSB hosted "Check In" which is a mental wellness program for schools and communities that LYSB purchased from the Jordan Porco Foundation. This is a nationally recognized program given to thousands of youth every year. This Foundation is a frequent partner with many of Connecticut's youth service bureaus and prevention coalitions. During Check In, students participate in interactive and uplifting activities and games, all promoting mental health. We had five booths with five fun activities. Students' hands were stamped at each booth. Any student who had three or more hand stamps was given a ticket for a free Del's Frozen Lemonade. Part of the Check In program includes an optional program evaluation accessed with a QR code on a phone with 9 questions. The 9 questions asked for demographic information and feedback on their experience at Check In. Approximately 300 students participated in Check In and received Del's Lemonade. Only 35 students completed the optional program evaluation. No one was required to participate in the program evaluation in order to receive the Del's Lemonade. LYSB is fully aware of Region 18's policy regarding surveys and the need to get surveys approved in advance. This was a mistake on our part to skip this step. We did not realize the program evaluation could be considered a survey, and we certainly would have asked for approval had we known. I want to stress that this evaluation was optional and anonymous. I also want to stress that this event was for high school students only. No students in any other grade participated. LYSB's vision is to create a world where every child has access to the resources and support they need to thrive and achieve their full potential. We aim to be a leading organization in promoting and enhancing the well-being of children and youth, and to empower them to become successful and responsible adults. LYSB cannot achieve this goal without the strong partnership with, and support from, our community and, most importantly, Lyme Old Lyme Schools. For this we are grateful.

Mrs. James commended Mrs. Seidner for coming forward to address this issue. There was Board discussion on the concerns raised by some parents, especially the wording of questions posed on race, ethnicity and gender and how the data was being used by Check In and LYSB. Mr. Neviasser provided information on the current protocol for student surveys which are not allowed without prior approval and review. The Board recommended that this be turned over to the Policy Committee so that clear direction on student surveys is drafted.

Maria Marchant, an Old Lyme resident, voiced concern that most of the students who took this survey were minors (some 14/15 years old) and should not have been given a survey they didn't understand.

Mona Colwell read a statement on the subject of book censorship.

My name is Mona Colwell and I live in Old Lyme. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I just wanted to mention something that's been coming up across the state and has been affecting us here in town. People are concerned about banning censorship for books. My family and I moved here nine years ago specifically for the school district, and one of my son's first assignments was to read a book from the library. He was in fifth grade and the books were recommended by the library. The first one he read was called "Ashfall." About eight pages into the book, my son felt uncomfortable because he had to read a swear word and I said "all right, I'll take a look at it." The rest of the book went on to have rape, drug

use, underage drinking, teen sex, disrespect for police officers and other very adult topics. I totally understand why he didn't want to read it. I didn't want him to read it either. I had just moved here having worked at a library for two years. I have the biggest respect for libraries, teachers and education. I've been in education practically all my life. So, I had him pick a second book. The second book he chose was called "Eye Of The Mind." It was about a serial killer who would get into the minds of children and convince them to kill themselves. I did contact the principal at the time and changed everything up so my son didn't have to read these books. It was dealt with, it was fine. Today, there's a lot going on right now with the library. I think some of you are aware of this; there's also a lot going on with the state. I would like to see if the Board can start thinking about having a policy created to protect our children from sexualized and pornographic material being introduced to children at too young of an age. The reason I say this is because it hasn't passed yet but a lot of these topics that have been presented and are going through in other school districts and have been in the news are very pornographic for children. I am presenting this tonight to suggest that there may be some type of policy that could protect children so they won't be exposed to sexual topics and pornography in school. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson cited research he has done on what books are raising concerns. Dr. Powell St. Louis suggested that the Board's policy on the library book collection be made part of the minutes. This policy appears below.

Instruction Policy

Media Centers (Libraries)

The Lyme/Old Lyme Public Schools Media Centers (libraries) shall provide and maintain materials and equipment which aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, and in the creative use of leisure time. The library is expected to provide positive contributions toward the development of the individual as a citizen, and the development of his/her knowledge and social consciousness. Regional School District 18 Media Centers shall help direct students in a continuous learning process through the use of books, instructional materials, and technology.

Lyme/Old Lyme Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to develop adult citizens for whom the use of books and other media of communication is a necessary and natural part of intelligent living. Library materials shall be selected relative to the needs, interests, and ability levels of the students in the Lyme/Old Lyme Public Schools. Media Center Specialists (librarians) and their aides shall attempt to stimulate and guide reading, and to teach effective library and technology skills. Media center personnel shall service young readers by:

- 1. creating selective collections of instructional materials;*
- 2. providing skilled individual and group instruction;*
- 3. developing among students an appreciation of reading as a tool for personal growth and a good use of leisure time;*
- 4. providing adult guidance in the use of the Internet and other technological media.*

The school district shall attempt to teach students to read critically and with understanding, and shall not attempt unqualified censorship efforts. In evaluating a book or other instructional material, it shall be judged in its entirety and not on isolated pages or parts. Controversial matters shall not in themselves

require automatic rejection of the material considered. However, no student shall be required to read a book or use instructional material which their parent or guardian finds distasteful for any ethical or religious reasons.

(cf. [6161](#) Equipment/Books/Materials: Provision/Selection)

(cf. [1312](#) Public Complaints)

Policy Adopted: September 1996.

Megan Anderson, an Old Lyme resident, asked that material be thoroughly reviewed before it is shared with the students. She cited an example of information on puberty blockers which was part of a health class instruction several years ago at the middle school level.

Mr. Staab asked that a review of books and other materials that are used in student instruction be included as part of the curriculum review process.

IV. Correspondence

Mr. Wilson reviewed a summary of the correspondence that the Board received over the last month which was an email from Debra Czarnacki expressing her concern over data collection by LYSB at the LOLHS field day event. The correspondence is attached to the minutes for informational purposes. *The opinions expressed in the attached correspondence are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the position of the Regional School District #18 Board of Education or its employees.*

V. Administrative Reports

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the June personnel report which reflected vacancies for the 2023-2024 school year (technology facilitator, campus security monitor, tutor and science teacher).

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the June enrollment report which reflected a total of 1,300 students in-house, no change from last month this time.

2. Business Manager's Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of May 31, 2023. Fluctuations of note: spending is on track year over year with nothing substantial to report.

Year To Date Revenue Report

	2021-2022 Received	2022-2023 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,006,352	\$24,277,211
Town of Lyme	\$5,996,088	\$5,221,080

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report. There was a decrease of \$6,637 in spending attributed to finalization of invoices and release of encumbrances. Balance is now \$48,181.

VI. Educational Presentation

There was no presentation scheduled this month.

VII. Chairman & Committee Reports:

- a. Facilities.* No report.
- b. Finance.* No report.
- c. Communications.* Mrs. Thompson summarized the discussion of their May 9 meeting. Of note, there is a need to change the distribution of the *Focus on Education* newsletter starting with the fall edition due to advertising changes at *The Day*. The committee is weighing the expense of mailing the newsletter vs. other means of distribution. Currently, *The Day* includes the newsletter with the *Lyme Times* which is changing to a more regional weekly publication.
Ms. Miller stated that she was in favor of moving the newsletter to online vs. mailing one to every resident.
- d. Policy.* Mr. Kemp summarized the discussion that took place at the May 9 meeting. Of note, the committee discussed reducing or eliminating tuition charged to staff members who live out of town and send their child(ren) to the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools. The committee's recommendation, after much discussion, was to remain status quo with the tuition policy/charges currently in place.
- e. LEARN.* No report.
- f. LOL Prevention Coalition.* No report.
- g. PreK-8 Building Committee.* Mr. Wilson reported on the May 15 meeting in which the committee voted unanimously to recommend Downes Construction as the construction manager for the PK-8 Facilities Project. Mr. Neviasser and Dr. Powell St. Louis spoke to the many positives of this company, especially in area of safety precautions.

VIII. New Business

1. Construction Manager Contract

As noted earlier, Mr. Neviasser reported that the PK-8 Building Committee unanimously recommends that the Board of Ed hire Downes Construction as the construction manager for the PK-8 Building Project. A fee proposal from Downes Construction for the construction management services was provided to the Board.

MOTION: Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Kemp, to approve the contract with Downes Construction for construction management services as recommended by the PK-8 Building Committee.

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

Mr. Neviaser reported that he is getting clarification from the State on whether they are required to have a contract specifically for each school.

2. LOLMS Field Trip Request

Mr. Neviaser reported that two students in the seventh grade have received an invitation to participate and contend in the prestigious National History Day competition held at the University of Maryland from June 11-15. Their outstanding performance in the regional and state competitions, where they secured the first position, has earned them this opportunity. Alongside students from across the state, they will attend the event with hopes of claiming the national championship in the group exhibit category.

Mr. Neviaser also reported that six high school student athletes on the track team qualified for the 76th Annual New England Interscholastic Outdoor Track and Field Championship which will take place on Saturday, June 10, at Cameron Stadium in Bangor, Maine.

MOTION: Mrs. Thompson made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Staab, to approve the field trip requests as presented.

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

IX. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

X. Executive Session

Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Dean-Frazier, to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing a Lyme-Old Lyme Administrators Association Memorandum of Agreement, the superintendent's evaluation, and the central office administrative contracts. Mr. Neviaser was invited to attend the executive session.

XI. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Staab and a second by Mrs. Dean-Frazier.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Thompson, Secretary

Summary of Communication to Board of Education
April 5, 2023

Sender	Date	Subject
Debra Czarnecki	June 4, 2023	Concern over data collection by LYSB at LOLHS field day event.

Delaura, Jeanne

From: Wilson, Steven (BOE)
Sent: Sunday, June 4, 2023 6:40 PM
To: Neviaser, Ian; Delaura, Jeanne
Subject: Fwd: EXTERNAL: LYSB data collection survey @LOLHS event

FYI and for the minutes

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Debra Paradis Czarnecki <debpczarnecki@icloud.com>
Date: June 4, 2023 at 3:19:37 PM EDT
To: "Wilson, Steven (BOE)" <wilsons@region18.org>
Subject: EXTERNAL: LYSB data collection survey @LOLHS event

Good afternoon Steve:

I am unable to attend the WED BOE meeting, due to previously scheduled meeting, however I wanted to comment on the recent "data collection by LYSB" at a LOLHS field day event.

First off, both of my young adult children had absolutely positive experiences in LOLHS and in the district 18 system. I was involved as a parent thru their school-age years and enjoyed all the experiences and have the highest respect for our teachers and administrators. When I learned about the recent involvement from LYSB at LOLHS field day, I was struck by lack of district 18 intervention. The students, less than 40 of them who participated, were asked what they identify as (with nine options), their race and their ethnicity? Sounds like questions for completing a passport application not part of field day. These are very personal questions that seem to be data collection. Where is that information going? Who conducted this survey (date collection in exchange for lemonade)? Did LOLHS/District 18 know about this? Was this survey done anonymously or the students name was on the paper?

Please know I usually do not comment on district 18 issues at this point, since our family had a very position experience, but this just can't be overlooked.

Appreciate all your efforts,

Deb Czarnecki