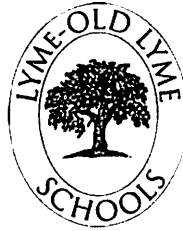


# LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

*Regional School District #18*

*A Private School Experience*



*in a Public School Setting*

## **Regular Board of Education Meeting**

March 6, 2024

*Board Present:* Jason Kemp, Chair; Anna James, Vice Chair; Christopher Staab, Treasurer; Martha Shoemaker, Secretary; Scott Brown; Laura Dean-Frazier; Susan Fogliano; Gavin Lodge; Alexander Lowry

*Administration Present:* Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; 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; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

*Others Present:* Olivia Hersant, RETA Co-President; Chloe Datum and Ada LaConti, High School Student Representatives; five community members from LOL

### **I. Call to Order**

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

### **II. Consent Agenda**

#### **1. Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting and Regular Meeting of February 7, 2024**

**MOTION:** Mr. Lowry made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Fogliano, to approve the consent agenda.

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

### **III. Visitors**

#### **1. Report from Student Representatives**

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

***49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371***

***T: 860-434-7238 F: 860-434-9959 E: neviaseri@region18.org www.region18.org***

*At LOLHS:* February was a calm month at the high school. The Math Team and Mock Trial Team both performed wonderfully at their competitions with Mock Trial advancing to the “Elite 8” on Friday, which will determine if they will compete in the state finals. The musical, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, was a huge success. Bravo to the cast and crew. The language department sponsored a trip to Chinatown in New York City where students were given the opportunity to experience Chinese culture. On the 15th, the band hosted the middle school bands to perform in the “Festival of the Bands” concert, which was a great experience for all. The Spanish Honor Society hosted a *Safe Futures* drive, collecting goods for those in need. In the athletic sphere, Hoshena Gemme and Chase Catalano won state championships in wrestling, and Hoshena moved on to win the New England Championship. The students enjoyed February break and returned rejuvenated and ready for March. SAT Prep has begun for juniors who will be taking the SAT later this month.

*At LOLMS:* February at the middle school began with a visit from high school students and school counselors who provided an overview to the current 8<sup>th</sup> graders of the high school schedule, course selection process, and the daily life of a LOLHS student. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade band students joined their high school counterparts and put on an amazing performance that truly highlighted students' musical abilities. February vacation provided both students and staff with a needed break as we move into the long March stretch. The musical is wrapping up their rehearsals as they prepare for next week's performance of *Singing in the Rain, Jr.* involving approximately 60 talented students.

*At Mile Creek School and Lyme Consolidated School:* Students at the elementary schools are celebrating Read Across America Day all week this week. At Mile Creek School, the theme is "Under the Big Top." The library media center has been transformed into a circus, and students are engaging in many fun, circus-themed activities highlighting the love of reading. A storyteller from Treehouse Players worked with students to create performances based on the story *The Magic Hat Shop*. At Lyme School, students participated in various themes throughout the week. This will culminate on Friday with students and staff dressing up as their favorite book characters. We are also looking forward to having students from LOLMS visit and read with the students.

*At Mile Creek School, ACE,* the PTO-sponsored afterschool enrichment opportunities, began after school. Students signed up for a wide range of activities from learning how to play chess, to learning how to play pickleball. The sessions will run for four weeks. Last week members of the Coast Guard Cadet Music Department performed portions of the musical *Mary Poppins* for the entire school, and Channel 3 Meteorologist Mike Slifer visited the kindergarten classes to help them build background knowledge in preparation for the purposeful play scenario "The Weather Station."

*At Lyme School,* students are gearing up for Circus Week, which will take place from March 18-22. Fourth and fifth grade students will learn a variety of circus tricks including stilt walking, plate spinning, juggling and diablo stick tossing. This is a combined effort between the Lyme PTO, the National Circus Project and Mrs. Ambruso. On March 8, we will welcome families to view two performances of the Lyme Circus.

*In the Preschool Program:* February was a busy month at the preschool. We practiced fine motor skills in the Valentine card making workshop, and we exchanged special Valentine’s Day cards with all our friends. The students learned about shadows, predicted whether or not the groundhog would see his shadow, and celebrated the Lunar New Year. The preschool welcomed the Connecticut Audubon Society whose staff taught a lesson about the power of plants, and we planted seeds which we will watch grow in our classrooms. The middle school students visited and read with the preschoolers in celebration of Read Across America Day. In March, we are looking forward to the study of space when the students will learn about the planets in the solar system, visit the International Space Station via YouTube, and learn about astronauts. The shape of the month is the diamond, the color is white, and Jennifer Sanchez is the artist of the month.

**2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**IV. Correspondence**

Mr. Kemp reviewed a summary of the correspondence that the Board received over the last month. 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.*

<b>Sender</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Ken Gray	February 28, 2024	Concerns over administration and thoughts on a pending lawsuit.
Betsy Ballard	February 8, 2024	Concern over charges for replacement of son’s Chromebook. *

*\*The actual correspondence has been omitted intentionally because it contained identifiable student information.*

**V. Administrative Reports**

**1. Superintendent’s Report**

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the March personnel report which reflected the following staff updates:

<b>Vacancies 2023-2024</b>	
<b>Instructional Assistants</b>	<b>Various Levels</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher (long-term substitute position)	Mile Creek School
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher (long-term substitute position)	Mile Creek School
Speech and Language Pathologist	Districtwide

<b>Vacancies 2024-2025</b>	
Assistant Principal (.5 FTE) and Teacher (.5 FTE)	Mile Creek School
Family and Consumer Science Teacher	LOLMS
Physical Education and Health Teacher	LOLHS

<b>Appointments</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Jodi Lenz	Custodian	Lyme School	February 12, 2024
Kim Rogers	Behavioral Tutor	Mile Creek School	March 11, 2024

<b>Resignations/Retirements</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Deborah Downs	Behavioral Tutor	Mile Creek School	February 23, 2024

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the March enrollment report which reflected a total of 1,297 students in-house, an increase of two students from last month this time.

Mr. Neviaser gave an update on the progress towards the district goals.

### *Curriculum*

Continue to document/revise curriculum in accordance with the five year Curriculum Revision Cycle.

- February PD day: Teachers with curriculum goals used time for curriculum development. All grade 3-5 teachers participated in full-day grade level meetings where curriculum documentation check-ins were done and timelines established through August 2024. A second module will be documented in 2024-2025.

### *Human Resources*

In alignment with state guidelines, utilize the PDEC committee to revise the teacher evaluation plan, communicate new expectations, and provide introductory training to all certified staff.

- PDEC reviewed resources and narratives for the plan. Faculty meeting update for all staff on the process and timeline.

### *Community*

Collaborate with the community via regular updates in an effort to maintain and enhance school-community relationships.

- Providers breakfast on March 21, 2024.
- Greenhouse renovation.
- Peer visits for PK3.

### *Facilities*

In preparation for construction to begin in the summer of 2024, develop strategies to minimize classroom disruption, adhere to the approved budget and design, and continue to maintain existing facilities via the five-year plan.

- Phasing meeting with Downes Construction for all schools.
- Planning for limited access to buildings in summer.

### *Sustainability*

Develop “Green Teams” at each building to identify, address, and support student-driven Sustainability initiatives.

- LOLHS. 4R posters completed and placed in the cafeteria; bat box assembly completed on March 5; foot bridge construction at Champlain South with Old Lyme Open Space on March 9; O’Niantic 5K volunteer event on March 16.
- LOLMS. Eco-warriors participated in a presentation from the Connecticut National Estuary Research Reserve and Six Penny Oyster Farm about oysters, habitats and oyster farming.
- Mile Creek School. On March 27, students at Mile Creek will vote on the names for the "Trash Monster" and "Recycle Monster" created by fifth grade student leaders to teach students about what can be recycled and what must be thrown away in the cafeteria. The Cultivators Team met for their first meeting and will be planning this year's plantings for the courtyard.
- Lyme School. Invited to attend a Lyme Garden Club Meeting to discuss ideas for a raised bed garden that we will design and maintain.
- Center School. The Connecticut Audubon Society visited the preschool and taught lessons about early spring, and students planted seeds which will germinate in the classrooms. Students continue to practice recycling in the classrooms and in the cafeteria, and families continue to participate in the Trex Challenge by collecting and sending in plastic film for recycling.

### *Board of Education*

Attend professional development opportunities offered through CABE including the CABE/CAPSS Convention and the state-mandated new BOE member workshop.

- No new updates.

## 2. Business Manager’s Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of February 29, 2024. Fluctuations of note: There are fluctuations on spend to budget in some of the line items, but the overall spend to budget is down slightly year over year. In dollars, this equates to \$375,719.

## Year To Date Revenue Report

	2022-2023 Received	2023-2024 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,521,402	\$17,588,556
Town of Lyme	\$5,918,777	\$4,048,935

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report which reflected no new spending and a reduction of \$443 from last month. Balance stands at \$143,310.

### VI. Educational Presentation

There was no educational presentation scheduled.

### VII. Chairman & Committee Reports:

- a. *Facilities*. Mr. Staab reported that this committee met at Lyme School earlier in the evening and the main area of discussion centered on finding swing space during construction. There are no major facility issues there; the back steps have been replaced and future improvements include replacement of another set of stairs and exterior painting.
- b. *Finance*. No report.
- c. *Communications*. No report.
- d. *Policy*. No report.
- e. *LEARN*. Dr. Brown reported that Goodwin University Magnet School in Hartford will no longer be under the LEARN umbrella of schools. Mr. Neviasser noted that this magnet school will still be part of the ECHMC health cooperative.
- f. *LOL Prevention Coalition*. No report.
- g. *PreK-8 Building Committee*. Mrs. Fogliano acknowledged the passing of former Board of Education Chairman Steven Wilson noting his efforts on the Board of Ed and the PreK-8 Building Committee. Mrs. Fogliano reported on variances granted by the by Zoning Board of Appeals for the building project at Mile Creek School. There is no longer a need for a variance at Lyme Consolidated School. Regarding the process for applying for extensions for the state grants due to supply chain issues, Mrs. Fogliano reported that this should be in place sometime in March. Mrs. Fogliano reported that she put together a PowerPoint presentation in order to provide background information on work done thus far on the project. She has also asked the engineers, architects and construction firms to provide material in advance of scheduled meetings so that the committee members can have ample time to review.

Mr. Staab recommended that they publicize the fact that these meetings are open to the public.

Mr. Staab asked if there were any updates on the oil spill. Mr. Neviasser gave an update on meetings that occur routinely with DPH and DEEP. Of note, they are installing additional monitoring wells on some district and neighboring properties. Monthly updates are posted on the website here:

<https://www.region18.org/district-information/central-services/facilities-department>

Mr. Kemp reported on the passing of former Board Chairman Steven Wilson and recognized his various contributions to the district. Dr. Brown asked for a moment of silence in honor of Jackie Sullivan, former art teacher at LOLHS, who also recently passed away.

#### **VIII. New Business**

##### **1. Healthy Food Certification**

Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that each local board of education or governing authority for all Connecticut public school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must take action annually to certify whether all food items sold to students will or will not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. This includes all NSLP public schools, regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical High School System, charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools and endowed academies.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lodge, that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Regional School District # 18 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, 2024, through June 30, 2025. 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, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

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

Mr. Neviasser clarified that this motion is strictly for food items *for sale* (not brought into the school by parents, etc.). Mr. Neviasser noted that the Wellness Committee is reviewing snacks being given (not sold) to students during the school day, and a proposal may be coming to the Board at a later date.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lodge made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Staab, that the Regional School District #18 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; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food sales.

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

## 2. Bleacher Project

Ron Turner, Director of Facilities and Technology, provided the following background information on this agenda item: the District partnered with SLR International Corporation to design a new ADA compliant bleacher system for the synthetic turf field along with spectator seating areas with bleachers for the middle field between the High School and Middle School.

Upon completion of the initial design work, in August of 2023, the District solicited proposals from qualified firms utilizing a public bidding process for the construction of the bleacher systems. The District received responses from two bidders, and the lowest bid result was \$467,000.

Based upon the higher than anticipated cost, the Board of Education rejected the two bids and requested that the project be redesigned to allow for cost saving measures such as precast bleachers. SLR presented a modification plan to the Board and estimated the redesigned project to cost approximately \$330,000. In February of 2024, the redesigned project went back out to bid and the District solicited proposals from qualified firms utilizing a public bidding process for the construction. Two interested companies attended the mandatory walkthrough, and only one bid proposal was received.

G. Donovan Construction            \$297,000 (\$103,950/middle; \$193,050/turf)

The bid was evaluated, and references were checked. G. Donovan has successfully completed several recent projects in the District including the Lyme Consolidated front stair replacement.

This project is included in the District's five-year facilities plan and \$40,000 is included in the 2023-2024 fiscal year budget. The additional amount of \$257,000 will be funded from the District's undesignated fund.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. James, to award G. Donovan Construction a contract to install bleacher systems at the synthetic turf field and the middle field located at the Lyme-Old Lyme High School for \$297,000.

Several Board members voiced concern over the cost and whether there was a real need for these bleacher systems. There was a suggestion to possibly break the job up and do one this year and one next year. Additional concerns were discussed such as the number of games/tournaments played on these fields, spectators and community members that would use the bleachers and other ways to make the bleachers handicapped accessible. The student reps noted that they thought parents of athletes would definitely appreciate the bleachers.

**MOTION:** Dr. Brown made a motion to postpone a decision on the bleacher systems to the next meeting.

**VOTE:** Dr. Brown, Mrs. Dean-Frazier, Mr. Lodge, Mr. Lowry, Mrs. Shoemaker and Mr. Staab voted in favor of postponing the decision. Mrs. Fogliano and Mrs. James voted against. Mr. Kemp abstained.



Motion passed (to postpone decision).

Mr. Turner did note that they may have to go out to bid again should they decide to split the job and that the bulk of the cost was the groundwork.

**3. Tuition Student Request for 2024-2025 School Year**

Mr. Neviaser reviewed a tuition student request for Mile Creek School for the 2024-2025 school year.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Brown, to approve the tuition student request for Mile Creek School as presented.

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

**IX. Old Business**

There was no old business to report.

**X. Executive Session**

**1. Pending Litigation**

Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Staab, to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation. Mr. Neviaser, Mr. Wygonik and Ms. Manfredi were invited to attend the executive session.

**XI. Adjournment**

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m. upon a motion by Mrs. Fogliano and a second by Mr. Staab.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Shoemaker, Secretary

*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.*

**Summary of Communication to Board of Education**  
**March 6, 2024**

<b>Sender</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Ken Gray	February 28, 2024	Concerns over administration and thoughts on a pending lawsuit.
Betsy Ballard	February 8, 2024	Concern over charges for replacement of son's Chromebook. *

*\*The actual correspondence has been omitted intentionally because it contained identifiable student information.*

## Delaura, Jeanne

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**From:** Neviaser, Ian  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 29, 2024 4:14 PM  
**To:** Delaura, Jeanne  
**Subject:** FW: EXTERNAL: Lawsuit

For the BOE minutes under correspondence.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Noyes, Tammy <noyest@region18.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 28, 2024 2:10 PM  
**To:** Neviaser, Ian <neviaseri@region18.org>  
**Subject:** FW: EXTERNAL: Lawsuit

FYI

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ken G <kwgray3@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 28, 2024 1:43 PM  
**To:** Kemp, Jason (BOE) <kempj@region18.org>; Brown, Scott (BOE) <browns@region18.org>; Dean-Frazier, Laura (BOE) <deanfrazierl@region18.org>; Fogliano, Susan (BOE) <foglianos@region18.org>; James, Anna (BOE) <jamesa@region18.org>; Lodge, Gavin (BOE) <lodgeg@region18.org>; Lowry, Alexander (BOE) <lowrya@region18.org>; Shoemaker, Martha (BOE) <shoemakerm@region18.org>; Staab, Christopher (BOE) <staabc@region18.org>  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL: Lawsuit

Mr Kemp

I just finished reading the story in the CT examiner and the lawsuit against Region 18.

I have three students who have attended or attend this school district ,one is currently a senior.

Mr. Neviaser, Mr. Wygonik and Ms.Manfredi have a long history of acting without any common sense or within any reasonable guidelines of school policy. They are little more than adult bullies that make stuff up on the fly usually based off of rumor and speculation.They have called me to make verbal accusations on a few occasions but have always refused to document those claims in writing. Essential when they call with an alleged behavior issue I would tell them to shut up and email the accusations for review by our attorney. Im a reasonable person but after listening to them a few times I learned I was dealing with idiots and refused to have phone conversations with them.Everything mysteriously disappears when they have to leave documentation so that was the end of it and ceased targeting our son.

They all have become far too comfortable threatening kids and parents and fabricating stories after the fact to justify poor decision making and errors in judgment. It was only a matter of time before they crossed the far more dangerous line to put themselves and the district in the position you currently find yourselves. None of us are surprised so I find it hard to believe anyone on this board can pretend you didnt see this coming.

Mr. Neviaser has threatened me in the past for exposing his fraudulent SRBI program years ago. I produced so much documentation of academic fraud he threatened me with arrest because I told a former Administrator I would bury them in court with the districts own records and future depositions. Mr Neviaser decided to get cute and call the State Police to claim I threatened to bury a staff member. He was exposed when the investigation took place and the obvious truth of what I said was reported supported by emails. Those incidents were well documented and the Board not only retained Mr. Neviaser but gave him a raise. Mysteriously the past Director of Curriculum and two Building Principles all disappeared from the district that summer so its safe to say my claims were valid and not the delusions of a crazy parent as Mr Neviaser tried to portray me previously. If he is not removed I will be in contact with this family to provide supporting evidence of the conduct of all of the individuals involved including the Board Of Region 18. The board has

prior knowledge of this behavior and hid it from taxpayers in executive sessions. I wont be the only one there is a long list of parents who have encountered the same behavior so the Board should not pretend this is an isolated incident. Reasonable people should not have to deal with this because of Board incompetence.If you are a long serving board member you had a responsibility to deal with this behavior years ago and you failed to act. If your new its time to make a change and begin finding competent people to run this District . Its is referred to as the LOL School District for a reason, the advertising campaign isn't fooling anyone who pays attention to the pathetic primary instruction that takes place. Thank god we exit this cesspool of fraud this year its embarrassing any of you pretend legitimate educational services are taking place.

Regards

Ken Gray

Old Lyme