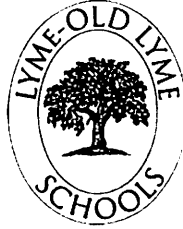


# LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

*Regional School District #18*

*A Private School Experience*



*in a Public School Setting*

## **Regular Board of Education Meeting**

February 7, 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; 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 and Heather Saia, RETA Co-Presidents; Chloe Datum and Ada LaConti, High School Student Representatives; one community member from LOL

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Jason Kemp. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting of January 3, 2024 as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted in favor of the motion. Mrs. James abstained as she was not present at the January 3 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Dean-Frazier, to approve the minutes of Executive Session of January 3, 2024 as presented.

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

***T: 860-434-7238 F: 860-434-9959 E: [neviaseri@region18.org](mailto:neviaseri@region18.org) [www.region18.org](http://www.region18.org)***

VOTE: the Board voted in favor of the motion. Mrs. Jams abstained as she was not present at the January 3 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the minutes of Special Meeting of January 10, 2024 as presented.

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

MOTION: Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lodge, to approve the minutes of Special Meeting of January 17, 2024 as presented.

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:

*At LOLHS:* 2024 is off to a great start at the high school. We kicked the month off preparing for midterms, which took place in the middle of the month. LOLHS welcomed back 2023 graduates to participate in a panel discussion about their first semester of college. January was also marked with many student achievements. Seventeen personal finance students became certified in financial literacy. Two juniors were accepted into UConn's STARTALK program, which will help them build on their knowledge of the Chinese language. Many students also earned accolades at the Connecticut Scholastic Art Awards, with Grace Phanauf moving on to the national level with her portfolio. January ended off with a very successful Winter Ball, which was enjoyed by all. Starting February off strong, the Mock Trial team advanced to the top eight in the state, and the winter musical, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, was performed for the middle school, with performances on February 8, 9 and 10. The indoor track team placed second on the shoreline and will be competing in the Class S state championships on Friday.

*At LOLMS:* At the middle school, students returned from winter break focused and rejuvenated. The 6<sup>th</sup> graders completed their South American inquiry-based research projects, while the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders completed their National History Day projects including the annual 8<sup>th</sup> grade showcase where students got a chance to share their knowledge, answer questions and hold discussions about their topics with families. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders have begun their semester-long transition to the high school beginning with Assistant Principal Manfredi meeting in small groups with each of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The drama club is continuing their preparations for this year's performance of *Singing in the Rain*. The winter sports season is wrapping up in the middle of February with a new set of clubs beginning including March Madness Basketball, Winter Running Club and Girls Volleyball Club.

*At Lyme Consolidated School and Mile Creek School:* Students at Lyme Consolidated and Mile Creek celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school last week. They engaged in a lot of creative and fun activities to mark the day. On February 6, two students from each school were honored at the Connecticut Association of

Schools Celebration of the Arts. The principals, art and music teachers joined the students and their families at the Aqua Turf in Southington for this special night. At Mile Creek School, Parker Lee was recognized for his outstanding performance in music, and Magnolia Sahl was recognized for her outstanding performance in the visual arts. At Lyme Consolidated School, Emma Hoxha was recognized for her performance in visual arts and Charlotte Zeng for outstanding musical performance. Also, in January, some of the fifth grade students participated in the Invention Convention. Four students are moving forward to the next level of competition. Congratulations to Colton Schroder, Winter Hampton-Dawson, Max Garvin and Taylor Rooney for being the district's representatives at the state competition. Lyme Consolidated School students were captivated by a performance by Tanglewood Marionettes. At Mile Creek School last month, all students were treated to an assembly with the storyteller Len Cabral. Mr. Cabral engaged students with his amazing storytelling abilities and helped them to see how each of us has special moments in our lives that can be turned into incredible stories. He also taught students about the history and traditions associated with storytelling across the ages. We also held our annual surprise Winter Wonderland event. Students had a joy filled day with all winter themed activities.

*In the Preschool Program:* January was an exciting month at the preschool. We started the month by celebrating the New Year, and we learned about shadows and groundhogs ahead of Groundhog Day. Students completed the mid-year PALS assessment, which assesses early literacy skills including letter sound identification and alphabet awareness, and we took advantage of the snow cover to learn about the freeze/thaw cycle. We also visited the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library and welcomed new middle school book buddies. Teachers are holding parent-teacher conferences. In February, we will practice our fine motor skills by making valentine cards and exchanging them with our friends. We will learn the letters Q, R, and S, study shadows and patterns, read books, and will celebrate the Lunar New Year. Jim Dine is the artist of the month, pink is the color of the month, and the heart is the shape 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.*

Sender	Date	Subject
Kim Healy	January 5, 2024 and January 7, 2024	January 5: Right to Read Legislation – member of CT Reading Leadership urging Board of Ed to ask state reps to make sure the amendment (waiver for high performing districts) to this legislation is brought up for vote when they return to Hartford next month.

		January 7: additional information on waiver and history of Right to Read legislation.
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Mrs. James asked if it would be a benefit to meet with Ms. Healy. Mr. Neviaseer reported that he did respond to Ms. Healy's email and has not received a response back as of this date.

## V. Administrative Reports

### 1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Neviaseer reviewed the February personnel report which reflected the following:

Vacancies	
Instructional Assistants	LOLHS
Speech and Language Pathologist (.65 FTE)	Mile Creek and Lyme School
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher (long-term substitute position)	Mile Creek School

Appointments			
Name	Position	Location	Effective Date
Lauren Levasseur	Speech Pathologist	Lyme School, LOLMS and LOLHS	January 3, 2024
Kayte Wheeler-Penezic	Elementary Spanish Teacher	Mile Creek School and Lyme School	January 29, 2024
Courtney Strekel	Kindergarten Teacher (long-term substitute)	Mile Creek School	January 22, 2024
Alethea Reynolds-Lee	Kindergarten Teacher (long-term substitute)	Mile Creek School	January 29, 2024
Leah Gear	Art Teacher (long-term substitute)	LOLMS	March 8, 2024 (approximate)
Jose Muniz-Rivera	Custodian	LOLMS	January 25, 2024
Katherine Torvisco	Custodian	LOLHS	January 22, 2024
William Nelson	Social Studies Teacher	LOLMS	February 13, 2024

Resignations/Retirements			
Name	Position	Location	Effective Date
Jaime Ottaviano	Media Specialist	LOLMS	January 26, 2024
Jennifer Harper	Custodian	Lyme School	February 8, 2024

Mr. Neviaseer reviewed the February enrollment report which reflected a total of 1,295 students in-house, no change 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.

- Michelle Dean's task completion list for curriculum revision/development was shared with the Board.

### *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.

- Professional Development and Evaluation Committee developed an executive summary and checklist for the new Region 18 Evaluation and Support Plan.

### *Community*

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

- Offered "HTTP and Me" program with LYSB.
- Worked with community judges on Invention Convention.
- Letter sent to abutters for Mile Creek School project.

### *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.

- Zoning meeting for Mile Creek School project upcoming - all paperwork completed.
- Received design / development plans.
- Bleacher bid walkthrough took place.
- Well tests continue to show no contaminants in neighbors' wells.

Mrs. Dean-Frazier asked about developing plans to minimize classroom disruption once construction begins. Mr. Neviaser reported on adjustments that will have to be made at the schools for those groups/ programs that normally use the buildings during the summer months; they are making accommodations as needed. The park and rec program will run as normal at Lyme-Old Lyme High School. Future plans include developing strategies for disruptions that may occur when school opens in August.

### *Sustainability*

Develop "Green Teams" at each building to identify, address, and support student-driven sustainability initiatives.

- LOLHS. 4R-themed poster creation to be posted in and around the cafeteria to bring awareness to "Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle." Focus is also on metal cutlery preservation.

- Mile Creek School. Student leaders are working to promote the reduction of waste in the cafeteria and to increase efforts to recycle. Straws have been eliminated and solo cups will be recycled.
- Center School. We continue to practice recycling in our classrooms and in the cafeteria, and families continue to participate in the Trex Challenge by collecting and sending in plastic film for recycling.
- Lyme School. In January, Green Team was featured on a WFSB program called "Great Kids" highlighting their work with composting. They are currently completing research and looking for a community partner to work on a raised bed garden for the late spring.
- LOLMS. Students in Eco-warriors worked together to establish goals and strategies for making the school greener, joined area schools for a trip to the Tantaquidgeon Museum in Uncasville where they learned about the history of Long Island Sound, its watershed, and the Mohegan people from the Mohegan perspective.

#### *Board of Education*

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

- Three Board members attended a CABE legislative breakfast in Westbrook.

#### **2. Business Manager's Report**

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of January 31, 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 \$377,580, which can wholly be attributed to debt service payments year to date compared to last year this time.

#### **Year To Date Revenue Report**

	2022-2023 Received	2023-2024 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,521,402	\$15,410,476
Town of Lyme	\$5,918,777	\$3,547,535

Mr. Kemp inquired about the increase in spending on pupil transportation vs. this time last year. Mr. Neviasser noted that this was based on the timing of invoices.

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report indicating an expense of \$2,500 for costs related to a well pump repair on the main campus. Balance stands at \$143,753.

#### **VI. Educational Presentation**

There was no educational presentation scheduled for this month.

#### **VII. Chairman & Committee Reports:**

- Facilities.* Mr. Staab reported that this group met earlier in the evening with the major discussion centering on the debt service reduction. He also reported that the Center and

- Middle School facilities are in good shape and that they are budgeting for a small playground at Center School which will be funded out of the facilities budget.
- b. *Finance*. See report above.
  - c. *Communications*. Mrs. Dean-Frazier reported on this committee's meeting of February 6 in which they discussed the next several issues of the *Focus on Education* newsletter. The April edition focuses on the 2024-2025 budget, and the committee shared ideas on best practices on publicizing the referendum in May. Mrs. Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing, is working with a former LOLHS student on a video showcasing the district with the goal of completing it by the end of this school year. There is a possibility of an open house at LOLHS in the spring for prospective students.
  - d. *Policy*. Mrs. James reported that the committee reviewed a School Climate Policy developed by CABE to provide districts guidance on recent revisions to Connecticut's school climate law, Public Act 23-167. There is no action needed at this time as school districts do not have to adopt and implement the new policy until July 1, 2025. Mrs. James also reported that a proposed resolution was brought forward by Mrs. Fogliano on the Right to Read legislation. The proposed resolution asks that the curriculum purchase requirements be removed, while putting forth justification for same. The committee decided not to move forward with the proposal at this time but will continue writing to legislators on this matter. Mrs. Dean-Frazier encouraged taxpayers to speak to their legislators on the unfunded Right to Read mandate.
  - e. *LEARN*. Dr. Brown reported that this group would meet the following day.
  - f. *LOL Prevention Coalition*. No report.
  - g. *PreK-8 Building Committee*. Mrs. Fogliano reported that due to the resignation of a committee member and the advancement of an alternate to the committee, there was a vacancy for an alternate. The committee is recommending bringing forward Daniel Adanti as this alternate. Mr. Adanti was an original applicant for the committee and has been assured that his voice would be heard even though he would be an alternate member. Mrs. Fogliano reported on her efforts on seeking extensions to the HVAC grants for the building project which are to be completed by December 2024. Mrs. Fogliano also discussed her presence at Zoning and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings for different variances that will be needed for the renovations planned at Lyme Consolidated School and Mile Creek School.

Mr. Staab requested that the minutes of the subcommittee meetings list those members absent from the meeting.

### **VIII. New Business**

#### **1. Approval of High School Field Trip**

The Board reviewed a request for a field trip to Washington, DC scheduled for November 2024.

MOTION: Mrs. James made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Fogliano, to approve the field trip request to Washington, DC as presented.

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

**2. Approval of Tuition Student at Mile Creek School for 2023-2024 School Year**

The Board reviewed a 5<sup>th</sup> grade tuition student request at Mile Creek School for the current school year.

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

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

**3. Approval of Tuition Students at LOLHS for 2024-2025 School Year**

The Board reviewed tuition student requests for a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student and four students from China via the Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) International Program for the 2024-2025 school year.

MOTION: Mr. Lodge made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the tuition student requests for LOLHS as presented.

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

The Board discussed the lack of requests from students from a variety of other counties through the ACES Program.

**4. Approval of the 2024-2025 Budget**

Mr. Neviasser reported that he had contacted the bonding agent regarding Mr. Staab's suggestion to pay down debt early to offset the large debt service looming in the 2025-2026 budget for the PK-8 project. He noted that they are not allowed to prepay on General Obligation Bonds but that another option would be to include monies in this budget that the district could use to pay directly for costs incurred by the PK-8 renovation project. In this way, they would save on interest costs and reduce the amount needed to borrow for the project. The information below show how much various increases in the budget would cost.

**Debt Service Payment Proposal**

% Increase	\$ Increase	Total Proposed Budget
2.5%	\$674,000	\$36,741,881
2.75%	\$763,000	\$36,830,881
3.0%	\$853,000	\$36,920,881

Original 2024-2025 budget proposal: \$36,067,881 / 0.62%

MOTION: Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Dean-Frazier, to approve the 2024-2025 budget in the amount of \$36,920,881 (a 3% increase from the current year's budget).



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

**5. Approval of New Alternate to PK-8 Building Committee**

With the resignation of Richard Conniff from the PK-8 Building Committee, there is a vacancy for an alternate on the committee as Tom Kelo (former alternate) has replaced Mr. Conniff. Mr. Kemp recommended community member Daniel Adanti who has a background in project management and environmental engineering. Mr. Adanti was one of the original applicants when the committee was being formed.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the appointment of Daniel Adanti as an alternate on the PK-8 Building Committee.

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

**IX. Old Business**

There was no old business to report.

**X. Executive Session**

There was no need for an executive session.

**XI. Adjournment**

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Lodge and a second by Dr. Brown.

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**  
**February 7, 2024**

<b>Sender</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Kim Healy	January 5, 2024 and January 7, 2024	January 5: Right to Read Legislation – member of CT Reading Leadership urging Board of Ed to ask state reps to make sure the amendment (waiver for high performing districts) to this legislation is brought up for vote when they return to Hartford next month.  January 7: additional information on waiver and history of Right to Read legislation.

**Delaura, Jeanne**

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**From:** kim healy <kimhealy1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 5:58 PM  
**To:** kim Healy  
**Subject:** Right to Read Waivers

Dear Board of Education members,

I am an appointed member of the CT Reading Leadership Implementation Council. The Council was created under the Right to Read legislation in 2021. I believe that our goals are to address the needs of struggling "Alliance" districts to improve reading scores and ensure that high performing districts were allowed to receive a waiver from the legislated requirements. As we all know - one size does not fit all in CT and almost all of waivers submitted were not approved.

I have been informed that the State Department of Education has no intention of reversing course at the this point and so the only way things can be corrected is for the original Right to Read legislation be amended. Just so you are aware, three of us from the Council testified in Hartford to the Education Committee for such amendments during the last session. Our testimony clearly fell on deaf ears as the only amendment voted on was to allow for a deadline change. Then on one of the last days of the session an amendment was filed- [LCO 10096](#) but was never called on for a vote. This amendment would have made the necessary change from a forced mandate to an option.

I urge you to ask your state representatives why they did not make sure this amendment passed to protect your local decision making and have them commit to proposing and supporting a change when they return to Hartford next month.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss further or to answer any questions. Our next Council meeting is on the 16th.

Fond regards,

Kim Healy  
Wilton, CT  
(203) 945-7335

\*\* Please forward to your superintendents.

**Delaura, Jeanne**

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**From:** kim healy <kimhealy1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 7, 2024 4:03 PM  
**Cc:** BoardofEdMembers@greenwich.k12.ct.us; darienboardofeducation@darienps.org; ncpsboemembers@ncps-k12.org; BOE; boe@westportps.org; boardofed@ridgefieldps.net; BOE@er9.org; nfboe@newfairfieldschools.org; all\_boe\_web; klaskin.seth@madisonps.org; mboemail@milforded.org; lpiascyk@woodbridgeps.org; foyled@glastonburyus.org; srosenberg2@cheshire.k12.ct.us; Delaura, Jeanne; boe@hebron.k12.ct.us; ldahlheimer@rsd13.org; boemembers@fairfieldschools.org  
**Subject:** Additional information for Reading Waiver

Hi again, Sorry to send another email but I had some questions about who is the Council and the history of the Right to Read law. Please note that I am happy to speak to any of you about this, so please do not hesitate to reach out.

Reading Leadership Implementation Council: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Academic-Office/Reading-Leadership-Implementation-Council>

Council Members: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Academic-Office/Reading-Leadership-Implementation-Council/Members>

Recent article: <https://ctexaminer.com/2023/12/16/top-performing-connecticut-school-districts-face-changes-after-states-denial-of-reading-waivers/>

Articles I have written about this:

12/23 <https://ctexaminer.com/2023/12/18/cost-of-reading-mandate-could-top-100-million-in-2024-5/>

6/23 <https://goodmorningwilton.com/op-ed-selectwoman-healy-says-one-size-fits-all-proposed-legislation-will-hurt-students-impinge-local-autonomy-and-cost-taxpayers/>

I have only received negative feedback about the waiver decisions and forced unfunded reading program mandate. If your district feels differently, I would really like to hear from you.

Best,

Kim Healy  
(203) 945-7335

**\*\*Please forward this to your full board and superintendent - thank you\*\***

Also, please let me know if you have been in contact with your state rep/state senator so I can follow up with them. Thank you.