

From the Cape Elizabeth School Board

Hard to believe we have entered March! The days are getting longer and seemingly equally busy. During the February 12th Regular Business Meeting Jennifer Kent, Executive Director of MEA Benefits Trust, provided the School Board with an explanation on how insurance rates are determined for CESD. While our district has a history of low high-cost claims and Per-Member-Per-Month expenditures that are 3.4% lower than the MEABT average, one year of increased claims — as was the case in 2017 and 2018 — increases rates for the immediate future. School Board members asked if there are ways to mitigate the impact for the years in which high-cost claims increase. Ms. Kent explained that through the MEAT's Onlife Wellness program, eligible members are provided incentives for pursuing preventive care and thus, hopefully, reducing the need for high-cost claims. While our district has nearly 500 eligible members, less than half have registered with the Onlife Wellness program. The School Board discussed that it wishes to have this program promoted more within the district and hopes that administrators will encourage their faculty to participate.

At the same business meeting, the School Board recognized the passing of Bill Gross, a long-term volunteer physics tutor at the CEHS. Just last year, Mr. Gross was recognized by the Board as one of several community members who have donated countless hours of their time to our students. The School Board feels a deep sense of gratitude to volunteers like Mr. Gross and offers their sincere condolences to his family.

Lastly, at the same business meeting CEHS students Lilli Frame, Ari Zeitlin, Raina Sparks, and Helen Strout communicated with the School Board that there is a need for gender-inclusive bathrooms at CEHS. Stating that as the number of people who self-identify as transgender, non-binary, and gender-neutral increases, the need for greater sensitivity and inclusion also increases. Currently, there are no gender-neutral bathrooms at CEHS. For students who identify as trans or gender nonconforming, there is no restroom in which they feel counted, comfortable, and welcomed. The School Board, while stating their support of establishing 1-2 gender-neutral restrooms at CEHS, requested that presenters make a greater effort to communicate with their peers and render their support. The School Board hopes to hear more on this subject within the next two months.

As always, recordings of all School Board Regular Business Meetings are

available at the [CETV website](#) and CESD website.

BUDGET:

The School Board is in full swing with the budget season. On February 15th the State released its subsidy reports. Cape Elizabeth has received a 33% increase in funding from last year. While it is far from covering half of CESD expenditures, the School Board is grateful that the district will not be facing another year of steep cuts.

At this point, all departments have presented their budgets and the School Board is in the process of evaluating all line items during budget workshops. The first opportunity for Q&A came on the February 26th workshop. During this workshop, Board members worked their way through questions for PCES, CEMS, and CEHS administrators. On March 5th, the following departments will have the opportunity to answer questions: Special Education, Facilities and Transportation, Improvement of Instruction, Technology, and the Office of the Superintendent. Time permitting, staffing and enrollment updates, and the implication of Federal mandates on staffing will also be discussed. After the March 5th workshop, the Board will be able to provide a more substantive and detailed budget update.

Workshops for *only* the **School Board Budget Review** as they currently stand, are as follows:

Tuesday, March 5th, Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers.

Tuesday, March 26th, Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CEHS Library.

Thursday, April 4th, Final Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers.

Health insurance costs will be provided and discussed, as well as any outstanding questions.

The School Board highly encourages community members to participate in the budget process. Questions and comments should be emailed directly to the [School Board](#). All budget-related materials and schedules can be found online at the [CESD Budget](#) tab, as they become available.

FACILITIES STUDY:

During the February 12th Business Meeting, Jamie Garvin, Town Council Chair and committee member of the Needs Assessment Committee presented the School Board with the committee's conclusion that they strongly recommend the inclusion of \$189,060 for a comprehensive Needs Assessment Study within the district's FY20 budget. The School Board voted 7-0 in favor of including this amount in the FY20 budget. For a complete review of the process and findings of the committee, please refer to the recently published [Executive Review](#) located under the Needs Assessment Committee tab on the school website.

POLICY:

The policy committee met on February 7th to continue the ongoing review of CESD policies. At the February 12th School Board meeting revised versions of the following policies were adopted by vote of the Board:

KF: Community Use of School Facilities;

ECB: Integrated Pest Management;

EEAEAA: Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers; and

IHOA: Field Trips

Revisions adopted include:

KF: Community Use of School Facilities - the policy was updated to reflect the Maine School Management Association policy. Regulations and Guidelines for Community use of School Facilities set forth in KF-R remain unchanged.

Policy ECB: Integrated Pest Management - revised to include current regulatory requirements.

IHOA: Field Trips - Certain transportation related details were removed to be included in a separate transportation policy. The adopted revised Field Trips policy will reflect regulatory requirements and clarify information required in field trip permission slips.

At the February 7th policy meeting, the committee also reviewed the

following policies for a first reading:

IHBAC: Child Find

DN: School Property Disposition

GCFB: Recruiting & Hiring of Administrative Staff

JRA: Student Education Records & Information

JRA-R: Student Education Records & Information - Procedure

The above listed policies were reviewed and the committee determined that certain updates should be implemented to reflect regulatory requirements. The committee also updated the School Property Disposition to adjust certain financial thresholds to reflect inflation. The above policies will be voted on but the full Board at the March 12th School Board Regular Business Meeting.

All policies are posted on the [CESD website](#) in the School Board section policy tab.

Policy Committee meetings occur once per month and are open to the public. The next policy meeting is scheduled for March 26th at 3:00 in the Jordan Conference Room.

FUTURE DATES:

- Tuesday, March 5th, Special Budget Workshop, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers.
- Tuesday, March 12th, Regular School Board Business Meeting, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers.
- Tuesday, March 26th, Special Budget Workshop, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CEHS Library & Learning Commons.
- Thursday, April 4th, Special Budget Workshop, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Location TBD.