November 2, 2026

Dear Region 20 Community,

I am writing to let you know about an upcoming Board of Education meeting on **November 5 at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Litchfield Intermediate School**. This meeting will update the community on a proposed change in Lakeview High School's athletic conference affiliation. **The Board of Education will also seek public input on this important decision, and I encourage all interested community members to attend and share their perspectives.**

Many members of our community have fond memories of competing in or attending Berkshire League athletic events. Tradition matters, and I have already heard from residents who strongly value Lakeview's longstanding connection to the league. Change does not come easy, and given the many changes associated with the formation of Region 20, it is understandable that some may wonder why Lakeview High School is exploring membership in a different athletic conference.

This discussion has not emerged suddenly. Rather, it results from several factors that have developed over time. Across our region, declining student enrollment has made it increasingly difficult for smaller schools in the Berkshire League to field complete teams, leading to greater reliance on cooperative athletic programs and scheduling out-of-league competition. At the same time, Lakeview's enrollment has nearly doubled through district regionalization, and its athletic programs have become increasingly competitive. As a result, Lakeview is better positioned than ever to be considered for membership in a larger, thriving athletic conference.

The Berkshire League has faced ongoing challenges in providing Lakeview student-athletes with consistently robust competitive schedules. The league currently includes three larger schools, Lakeview High School, Nonnewaug High School (Region 14), and Northwestern Regional High School (Region 7). The remaining member schools are mostly smaller Class S schools, many of which have struggled to sustain full varsity rosters and, in some cases, junior varsity and freshman programs.

In light of these trends, Lakeview is proactively seeking the Board of Education's permission to apply for membership in the Naugatuck Valley League (NVL), rather than waiting to react to potential future changes in league composition. Applying now allows the district to explore options that may better support the long-term needs of our athletic programs and student-athletes.

Submitting an application for league membership does not guarantee acceptance. Instead, it is the first step in a process that allows Lakeview to be considered for membership while we evaluate whether a different conference affiliation could provide greater competitive stability and scheduling opportunities in the future.

In a recent presentation, the Athletic Department identified several potential benefits of NVL membership. A larger conference could provide more stable and balanced scheduling while creating

additional opportunities for junior varsity, freshman, and middle school athletes. Our Athletic Director reports that our coaches believe competing in a deeper, more competitive league would promote athletic development and increase opportunities for student-athlete recognition. Because league members vote for various postseason honors, broader exposure within a larger conference may also benefit student-athletes seeking recognition at the league and state levels.

The Athletic Department has also suggested that regular competition against strong opponents could better prepare teams for postseason play. The NVL's size and structure, with more than fifteen member schools organized into divisions, may provide greater scheduling flexibility and enhanced opportunities for athletic participation.

Travel considerations have also been discussed. Student-athletes and their families already devote significant time to athletics, and extended travel can lead to very late evenings during the school week. To stay fully scheduled and competitive, Lakeview teams have increasingly sought contests outside the Berkshire League, with some requiring one-way travel times of up to 80 minutes. Under the proposed NVL alignment, the longest projected one-way trip would be less than an hour, potentially reducing travel demands while expanding scheduling options.

While several reasons have been presented in support of applying for NVL membership, there are also legitimate concerns and questions that deserve thoughtful consideration. The Board of Education recognizes that decisions of this nature should not be made based solely on potential benefits. Equally important are the values, traditions, relationships, and community connections that have been built through decades of participation in the Berkshire League.

That is why the Board has scheduled this public meeting. We want to hear from community members who support the proposal, oppose it, or remain undecided. The Board must weigh all perspectives carefully and make a decision that best serves our students' and communities' long-term interests.

I encourage you to attend the **November 5** meeting and make your voice heard.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Villar, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Regional School District 20