

## David Fiorillo - Member Spotlight from February 1, 2021



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While working in the financial industry, David Fiorillo volunteered to sit on his town's budget review committee, which led to him accepting the position of business manager for the City of Cape Coral Charter School Authority in Florida. From 2007 to 2013 Fiorillo was instrumental in developing and implementing the school's strategic business plan which resulted in growing the school district from an idea to a high-performing district with more than 3,500 students.

Interested in living in another part of the country, Fiorillo found a position at an independent school in northwest Connecticut. He joined Litchfield Public Schools as the Director of Business Operations in 2015. In July 2019, due to declining school populations in Connecticut, Litchfield Public Schools began the process of merging with neighboring Regional School District #6.

Fiorillo was promoted to chief financial officer for both districts. Over the past year the districts have worked together to create one central office. The next step is to align the various teacher and support staff unions from both districts, and ultimately create a combined district that educates students from four different towns.

Because of the complexities, school districts have not merged in Connecticut since the 1970s, though Fiorillo says he suspects this new move will create momentum for more of the many small districts in Connecticut to combine forces. While regionalizing will save the districts money, Fiorillo says the real impetus was to combine strengths in order to offer students more services in the era of declining enrollment.

Fiorillo recalls knowing when he joined the profession of school business that "it was what I was going to do for the rest of my life," adding, "I really can see the results of our hard work and feel like I'm contributing to the community." He advises newer colleagues that "schools are a people-based business, so the relationships you'll have with the people in the school are every bit as important as any other part of your job."

With the reduced office and meeting time brought about by COVID-19, Fiorillo says he has found online meetings and education to be very effective. However, he recommends picking up the phone for a quick conversation rather than trying to come to understanding in a series of emails, saying he finds a person-to-person dialog to be more efficient and more accurate.

A recipient of ASBO International's Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO®) designation, Fiorillo says, "the SFO is a nice way to represent yourself and your knowledge base. When I took the exam, I realized how closely the material aligned with what I was trying to accomplish at work. It definitely gave me a higher sense of confidence in what I was doing."

In addition to serving as the CFO for two districts, Fiorillo consults with smaller schools in Connecticut that do not have a budget to support a full-time business manager. Fiorillo focuses on building consortiums in which school districts and municipalities work together to reduce the utility costs related to energy generation, oil, and natural gas. These buying groups create savings with economies of scale. "There are lots of great things you can accomplish when you decide to work together with others," he says. He also has seen the benefits of green technologies in controlling long-term fixed costs through LED lighting and solar projects.

Fiorillo and his wife live in Salisbury, Connecticut. They have two children, 18 chickens, one dog and enjoy swimming, skiing, and hockey.