

**Regular Meeting**  
Eaton Board of Education Minutes  
Helen Keller Middle School - Library Learning Commons  
Tuesday, September 10, 2019  
7:30 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Board members: Parker, Chieda, Hicks, Reed, Stinson, Bindelglass (arrived after meeting started)  
Administration: McMorran, Pierson Ugol, Reiss, Del Conte, Fox Santora, Kaplan  
Others: 9 members of the public and staff

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 11, 2019 Special Meeting as submitted. Stinson, Hicks. Approved, 4-0. Chieda and Bindelglass abstained.**

Mr. Parker spoke of his intention to institute time limits on Public Comment, keeping each comment to 2 minutes per Robert's Rules of Order.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Adam Parker, Wedgewood Drive, Easton: thanked and congratulated the Board for efficiently addressing bus issues.

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Drive, Easton: expressed concerns regarding sexual education taught in schools, especially at the elementary level. She asserted that students are taught language they don't know and suggested that the Board look at recommendations from the American Psychological Association. Ms. Manusky also questioned the Public Comment time limits and questioned if it is something the Board can vote on. Recommended three minutes.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

Mr. Stinson commented that the Board Bylaws already include time limits for Public Comment. There is a need to continue reviewing the safety of the bus transition. Thank you to Mr. Parker for his work on behalf of the bus transition.

**Motion: move to add agenda item VII.F. Budget Update. Stinson, Reed. Approved. Unanimous.**

**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Pierson Ugol reported how the Curriculum Steering Committee (with representation from all five buildings) informs professional development. This committee crafted an ER9 vision and mission statement:

Two priorities:

1. Enhance data informed decisions (assessments to inform instruction)
2. Empower student ownership of learning

At future board meetings, Dr. Pierson-Ugol will share more information (including examples) about terms such as *personalized learning*, *authentic intellectual work* and *data cycles*.

## BUILDING ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Helen Keller Middle School - Mrs. Kaplan welcomed 11 new staff members to HKMS for the 2019-2020 school year. She reported that all HKMS students have been trained in School Climate and Restorative Practice by an outside consultant, the first school to have the entire school population trained. (Teachers have been trained in previous years.) This year, HKMS science teachers will join ILA, math, and social studies teachers in the data cycle process.

Samuel Staples Elementary School - Mrs. Fox Santora reported that SSES welcomed 12 new families, grades 1-5 (24 students) after June. One new music teacher joined the staff. She thanked the PTO for a delightful welcome back staff luncheon. Teachers continue to converse in data teams to analyze student assessments. In the fall, there are conversations between the previous teacher and the current teacher.

### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: REVIEW OF BUS COMPANY TRANSITION

Mr. Reiss thanked Laura Ponzio for her hard work facilitating the move from Dattco to First Student. There have been daily issues with trackers, yet most were resolved quickly. It was a challenging first day, a better second day. In general, he is happy with the transition. Mr. Reiss spoke about the technology from the bus company, specifically about forthcoming monitoring software and a parent app that is due to be released in approximately 30 days. Routes will continue to be fine-tuned as needed.

Mr. Parker shared that he met with the bus company prior to the start of school and knew there would be time issues. The board sent out a parent letter on August 23rd, trying to cluster some bus stops. Once school had started, Mr. Parker visited 27 houses, going door to bus stop. A number of changes resulted. Some will continue to be monitored. Mr. Parker asked Chief Shaw to advise going forward.

Mrs. Chieda thanked Mr. Parker but expressed concern that it took an extensive amount of one board member's time to make the bus routes work, which is not sustainable. Mentioned the need to look at the impact of budgetary decisions.

Mr. Stinson shared concerns related to bus safety in light of the amount of distracted drivers on the road and thanked Mr. Parker for including Chief Shaw in the conversation.

### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ASPHALT DONATION - HELEN KELLER MIDDLE SCHOOL PTO

The FundRaising Chair of the HKMS PTO spoke about the basketball court at HKMS. O & G Industries was asked to donate the asphalt needed to repair the court. They did not donate but reduced their price from \$89 a ton to \$66.50 a ton. Ninety six tons are needed. Chris Barcello volunteered to demolish, which will save on the project. Looking to begin the first week of October, and the work should take two days. Sarah Lehberger met with PE teachers regarding additional needs (backboard, fencing, repair rusted pole), and looking to add a Gaga Pit (which John Read has), which would cost an additional \$1000. Seven thousand dollars were raised in a variety of ways, and ELF also donated \$3000.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept ten thousand dollars from the PTO and ELF to improve basketball court at Helen Keller Middle School. Chieda, Reed. Approved. Unanimous.**

### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: PERSPECTIVE ON MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION

Dr. McMorran spoke about how hiring of a new permanent middle school principal at JRMS provides an opportunity to reflect on the role of middle school in the ER9 structure. Dr. McMorran presented a slideshow entitled: *Our Children's Future is Not Our Past*. As a learning community we need to come to terms with technology as we are preparing students to be future-ready. The future will bring professions that require a huge increase in all levels of technology. Our middle school goals include collaboration, cooperation, and problem-solving.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mrs. Chieda proposed a Board of Education Communications Committee to address the need to communicate effectively and frequently with parents and other community members. She reached out to the Redding Board to find out what they are doing to communicate with the public. She anticipates a tough budget season. Without a newspaper, there is an information void that may result in misinformation, including rumors spread on social media. Community members, in general, don't understand how the tri-district works. Mrs. Chieda and Mr. Stinson both expressed willingness to participate in this committee, and will work on a prototype of a Facebook page as a jumping off point.

**Motion: move to establish an Education Communications Committee with Jenny Chieda and Jon Stinson as members. Hicks, Bindelglass. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: POLICIES - 1st READING

Mr. Stinson initiated a review of a number of policies due to changing state and federal laws.

**Motion: move to accept the Policies for 1st Reading as presented. Hicks, Reed. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

New Director of Special Education, Jennifer Del Conte, introduced herself to the Board. She has been in education for 29 years as a regular and special education teacher as well as working in administration. J. Del Conte shared the goals of the department (the 4 Cs): communication, creation of policies, collaboration, and commitment. In the coming months, she will observe trends and strengths of the Special Education program and communicate with building administrators. The more robust our department, the less need to send students out of district. When asked if there is a need to reevaluate students who are out of district (4) she stated that each year the teams determine if out of district students can be supported here.

Mr. Reiss reported that he needs to make a decision in the next few weeks regarding the replacement payroll and financial system. There is a need to upgrade the current system, Phoenix, to a new system. He joined 13-15 other districts and considered nine different vendors. PowerSchool remains the most competitive. The cost will be shared by the three boards, approximately \$25,000 per board. Migration will be time-consuming. He is asking for the authority to move forward with a decision.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education give Scott Reiss, the Director of Finance and Operations, the authority to make decisions for the Board regarding the replacement payroll and financial system, currently referred to as the Phoenix system. Chieda, Stinson. Approved. Unanimous.**

S. Reiss provided updates about security at SSES, paving at both schools, special education accommodations, gym renovations, tile work at HKM, and air conditioning at HKMS. In addition, there

Page 3 of 4

will be testing of the oil tank at HKMS. The cost includes testing and analysis. He cannot receive a quote on any possible repairs until an analysis is done. Following the close of the 18-19 fiscal year, unspent funds were returned to the town. Medical insurance for certified staff was overspent an electricity costs, in large part due to air conditioning usage, were up.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve a budget transfer to move budget money in the amount of \$30,000 from outside services (11-2600-330) to (in-house) staff non certified (11-2600-112) to pay for the services of the School Security Officer. Hicks, Stinson. Approved. Unanimous**

Dr. McMorran shared distribution of the 2018-19 Teacher Evaluation System for Easton:

Score point 4= *lead teacher*= 16 teachers

Score point 3= *effective teacher* (goal) = 70 teachers

Score point 2= *developing* = 3 teachers

Score point 1= *below standard*= 0 teachers

There are five people with no ranking, and no teachers on structured support.

#### BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Parker proposed a status quo budget, beginning with what are we committed to contractually then adding what goes above and beyond (ex: HKMS extracurricular activities, new parking lot for SSES, restore media specialist). Mr. Parker plans to invite the Board of Finance to the next Board of Education meeting to share the process and what we need in order to run a first-class school system. Mrs. Chieda shared her concern that budget “extras” will be easily taken away. She mentioned that this is an election cycle, which means there may be potential for changes on BOF in November.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education develop a “mandatory” budget view as a means of beginning the budget process. Bindelglass, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Krista Zilberg, Lobdell Lane, Easton: commented that the technology focus outlined in Dr. McMorran’s presentation is great. Salaries in this field for graduates are high.

Allison Bonoff, Gregory Farm Road, Easton: questioned how, if there is a lack of money, we are going to focus on technology?

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Ms. Reed thanked Mrs. Kaplan for the Open House, featuring the Raising Helen band. She also thanked Mrs. Fox Santora for preparing 6th graders for their middle school experience. Mrs. Chieda thanked and welcomed new PTO leadership. Mr. Parker also thanked the PTO.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education meeting be adjourned. Reed, Stinson. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Submitted by Jenny Chieda, Easton Board of Education Secretary  
Recorded by Liz Rimkunas