

Filed subject to approval

EASTON, REDDING, REGION 9 BOARDS OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
March 30, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.
Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members:

Region 9: Johnston, Graziano, Berry, D'Agostino, Denny, Williams, O'Brien, Pampel

Easton: Parker, Stinson, Chieda, Hicks, Goldstein (Absent: Reed)

Redding: Parkin, Whaley, Pilato, Hoffman, Reilly, Oulton, Hocker

Administration: McMorran, Pierson Ugol

Others: 36 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary

T. Johnston called the Region 9 Board of Education meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

J. Parker called the Easton Board of Education meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

C. Parkin called the Redding Board of Education meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. Reilly said that he understands, firsthand, the plight of teachers in this new learning environment since his wife is a teacher and has been working very hard; he knows all teachers have been working hard. He said he is concerned about what the impact of the scheduled spring break will have on the continuity of learning and engagement, and he feels having spring break will lead to more boredom and congregating of the students.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: SPRING BREAK SCHEDULE

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Tom McMorran, spoke first saying that he was advocating for time for teachers, families and students to have some time off. He said that teachers are now using and learning new resources and that our biggest asset is the district workforce. He also said that he is in awe of how families across the district are making this all work. Dr. McMorran asked that the Boards consider giving multiple days as just vacation, and that with this break, we will all be able to jump back in with even more vigor.

A motion was put forth by all three Boards to eliminate the entirety of the scheduled spring break. After some initial discussion, this motion was withdrawn by all three Boards.

C. Graziano said that teachers and students should all be commended for doing a great job on a daily basis. She also said that she is nervous about taking the entire week off for spring break.

M. Pampel said she initially thought that spring break should be cancelled, but now she feels that we need to give the teachers a break and that they need a break.

J. Stinson said that he doesn't think that anyone will lose momentum with a spring break, and that he agrees with Dr. McMorran that people will come back with more vigor. He said people need to be able to hang out with their families without having to do school.

J. Chieda said that she agrees with J. Stinson.

G. Goldstein said that she thinks some days should remain in spring break, but not all. She also said that she doesn't think it would be fair that the teachers didn't get a rest because we're afraid the kids will not be social distancing.

H. Whaley said that she agrees that teachers do need time off, but that we should keep in mind that the students just had a week off.

K. O'Brien asked if the teachers want to plow through and work, or if they wanted some time off. She also asked about this affecting the scheduled last day of school.

Dr. McMorran replied that the teachers are asking for time off, and that the scheduled last day of school would not be affected.

M. Williams said that she thinks the Boards should follow the recommendation of the administration.

T. Johnston said he feels that the kids need to get into some kind of a routine and that a four-day weekend would be sufficient.

G. Denny said that we had a week off, but that she is certainly sympathetic to the teachers.

M. D'Agostino said that Tom is the educational leader and that he is ok with following his lead.

J. Berry said that she is a teacher and that she needs a break. She said that AP class students might still need to study over spring break.

C. Parkin and M. Hoffman both said that they have heard sentiments of not wanting the full spring break from the K-8 parent community for whom they represent.

A motion was put forth from all three Boards to have April 13 and 14 as vacation days; April 15 as a professional learning day; and April 16 and 17 as regular school days. The motion was then withdrawn by all three Boards.

J. Chieda said that the issues of spring break days and the end date of school were two separate issues, and that they should decide on spring break now and decide on the end date at another time.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education change the Spring Break of the 2019-2020 school year to reflect the following: April 13, 14 and 15 (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday) will be vacation days for all students and staff; April 16 and 17 (Thursday and Friday) will be half school days for students and staff and half professional learning days for staff (Oulton, Hocker).

Approved. Vote 4-3. (Parkin, Hoffman, Reilly opposed).

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education change the Spring Break of the 2019-2020 school year to reflect the following: April 13, 14 and 15 (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday) will be vacation days for all students and staff; April 16 and 17 (Thursday and Friday) will be half school days for students and staff and half professional learning days for staff (Stinson, Goldstein).

Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education change the Spring Break of the 2019-2020 school year to reflect the following: April 13, 14 and 15 (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday) will be vacation days for all students and staff; April 16 and 17 (Thursday and Friday) will be half school days for students and staff and half professional learning days for staff (Pampel, O'Brien).

Approved. Vote 5-3. (Johnston, Graziano, D'Agostino opposed).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rose White, Sunset Hill Road, Redding, said that she was in favor of no spring break so that there would be continuous learning.

Angela Taos, Deer Hill Road, Redding, said thank you to everyone and that the greatest amount of communication you can offer would be great. She also said that the Board should make a plan for continuing the lunches during spring break because some people will still need them.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

C. Pilato said that she was speaking as a parent who has a child who thrives in school and the schedule of school. She said that she fully acknowledges that teachers and administration need a break but would appreciate some guidance as to what to offer our children during the break.

G. Goldstein said that she would like to request that the summer reading list be put out now; that it's the perfect opportunity for kids to do more.

J. Stinson said that the town libraries would be happy to put together lists of books for students.

H. Whalen said that she hoped the high school teachers are adjusting how they grade.

C. Graziano thanked everyone for working together. She said that what the teachers are doing is good for her kids. She also said that at a future meeting, she would like an agenda item to be a discussion of adding days to the school year.

C. Parkin said that he would be remiss if he did not thank the administration, staff and office staff for turning a brick & mortar school into a correspondence school. It is tremendous work that they are all doing.

J. Chieda said that this is hard. We have to try to operate and be gentle to ourselves and to others.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education meeting be adjourned (Oulton, Reilly).
Approved. Unanimous.**

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

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education meeting be adjourned (D'Agostino, O'Brien).
Approved. Unanimous.**

The Region 9 meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

The Redding meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

The Easton meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Submitted by,
Juliette Berry, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by,
Sarah Ota