

Filed subject to approval

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons

November 19, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: D'Agostino, Hocker, Denny, Graziano, Hancock, Williams

Absent: Coppinger, Johnston

Administration: McMorran, Pierson Ugol, Reiss

Staff: Desmarais, Pinsky, Czudak

Others: 7 members of the public, recording secretary, videographer

Mr. D'Agostino called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of October 22, 2019, Regular Meeting as submitted. (Hancock, Williams). Approved, 5-0-1. One abstention (Denny).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of October 29, 2019, Easton, Redding and Region 9 Joint Boards of Education Regular Meeting as submitted. (Hancock, Williams). Approved, 5-0-1. One abstention (Denny).

STUDENT COMMENT

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Susanne Krivit, Blackrock Turnpike, Redding: Said she would miss the Region 9 Board members who are leaving the board.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Ms. Williams stated that she will miss the thoughtful, insightful and wise contributions from Mr. Hancock and Mr. Hocker. Mr. D'Agostino thanked the departing Region 9 Board members, stating that Mr. Hancock contributed greatly to the Region 9 Board of Education and that Mr. Hocker's value to the Board had been significant. Mr. D'Agostino presented both Mr. Hancock and Mr. Hocker with a crystal apple from the Region 9 Board of Education. Mr. D'Agostino stated that Mr. Coppinger's contribution to the Region 9 Board of Education was also significant and that he would make sure that Mr. Coppinger received his crystal apple, as he was not in attendance. Mr. Hancock said that all of his children went to Joel Barlow High School and found places to grow and felt prepared; he thanked the JBHS staff and Region 9 BOE for this. Mr. Hocker said that it had been a privilege and great experience serving on the Region 9 Board of Education. He also said that he hoped that the Board would continue to operate in a non-partisan manner.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Pierson Ugol, thanked the Region 9 Board members who were leaving and said she appreciated their support and kindness. Dr. Pierson Ugol reported on the November 5 professional learning day for Redding, Easton and Region 9 teachers, stating that the teachers engaged in content-based vertical team meetings. She focused on the work done by the STEM team with a consultant from Sacred Heart University. The STEM team was able to create a 3-year plan that will result in a better alignment in middle school programs so that there will be equity in the form of preparedness and gender within JBHS STEM courses. Mr. Agostino asked that if professional development days have value, can we come to a unification for professional development days across the three districts. Dr. Pierson Ugol responded that Central Office is working on this, but that the early dismissal times are different for Redding and Easton and that the contracts are different for the faculty at the three districts. Dr. McMorran added that this will be a consideration when teacher contract negotiations begin in the spring.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: UPDATE ON ANNUAL AUDIT

Mr. Reiss and Ms. Graziano reported on the status of the annual Audit. The audit report will be coming out on December 2 and that the auditor will be attending the December meeting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROFILE

Dr. McMorran reported that the School Profile and Performance Report for Joel Barlow High School is available on the State of Connecticut's web site, and that the data in the report is from the 2017-2018 school year. He said that the state has not yet posted any data that is more current even though more current data has been provided by ER9. Mr. D'Agostino stated that it is a state requirement that Dr. McMorran give this report during the November board of education meeting. Mr. D'Agostino asked if there would be any significant changes in the most recent data. Dr. McMorran replied no.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2019 PROWDA ENROLLMENT REPORT

Dr. McMorran encapsulated the enrollment report for Joel Barlow High School that was conducted by Peter Prowda, Ph.D. He stated that: JBHS student body will decline over the next six years; student body will repopulate in 2026; and, this is a natural demographic curve. Dr. McMorran said that this report will be guiding the work by administrators and staff to "right-size" the school. He also said that there are many positives to having a student body of 700, such as: staff having the ability to know all students, and the students having ownership of their community. Ms. Graziano asked that if staff and programs are down-sized, then in several years' time will there be a need to spike them back up again. Dr. McMorran replied, yes and that is why they call it "right-sizing."

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY RESULTS

Joel Barlow High School Assistant Principal Ms. Desmarais and Joel Barlow High School faculty member Mr. Pinsky presented a report on a recent School Climate survey. They first presented the Three C's of the Joel Barlow High School climate components as being: Complexity, Community and Communication, and said that students, staff, families and the larger community are all doing the work toward these components. They stated that the JBHS School Climate committee is working with the district to find a way to increase the number of responses and that there was a positive trend in parent responses. Mr. Pinsky explained the issue of data complexity as "How do we interpret the data?" and "How did the students interpret the questions?" Ms. Desmarais said that meetings are on the first Wednesday of every month and invited anyone to attend a meeting. Mr. Hocker asked how have things changed, climate-wise, in the time that Ms. Desmarais has been at JBHS.

Ms. Desmarais said that not long ago "climate" was not even discussed, but that recent events have made JBHS address the issue. She also said that today's students live in a world where everything is breaking news, including the weather, and that this causes stress on students. Ms. Graziano asked if she (Ms. Desmarais) has seen an increase in stress and mental health issues. Ms. Desmarais replied yes and that many studies and experts see a correlation in stress and social media. Ms. Graziano asked if the JBHS climate programs will address the survey results. Mr. Pinsky replied that the School Climate Committee work is moving in that direction. Mr. Pinsky also reported that he had conducted an experiment with 55 of his students tracking their cell phone usage and that the results were interesting. He plans on expanding this experiment to a larger number of students.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: POLICY - 1ST READING 6142.101 WELLNESS POLICY

Mr. Reiss reported that this item was important for the agenda because this policy needs to be compliant for the upcoming audit.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept Wellness Policy 6142.101, for a first reading. (Williams, Hancock). Approved. Unanimous.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education add Agenda Item I, "Acceptance of Donations," to the Agenda. (Denny, Hocker). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: DONATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT

Mr. D'Agostino said that on behalf of the Region 9 Board of Education we acknowledge the gift of photography equipment from Emily Asen and thank Ms. Asen for the gift.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: LOCKHEED MARTIN DONATION TO ROBOTICS PROGRAM

Motion: Move that Region 9 Board of Education accept with gratitude a grant of \$2,000 from Lockheed Martin to the Joel Barlow High School Robotics Team for the 2019-2020 season. (Hancock, Graziano). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CONSIDERATION TO FUND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the use of \$2,840 from the 2018/2019 sale of iMacs to cover the cost of a Jamf certification training course for a technology staff member. (Hancock, Hocker). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ACCEPTANCE OF PRATT AND WHITNEY GRANT

Motion: Move that Region 9 Board of Education accept with gratitude a grant of \$3,000 from Pratt and Whitney to the Joel Barlow High School Robotics Team for the 2019-2020 season. (Denny, Hancock). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ACCEPT DONATION FROM WELLER FOUNDATION

Motion: Move that Region 9 Board of Education accept with gratitude a grant of \$3,000 from the Weller Foundation to the Joel Barlow High School World Language Department. (Hancock, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Director of Finance & Operations, Scott Reiss, reported that: new staff member Oliver Crouch is being transitioned into his position; the bus app for cell phones was deployed in two waves in October and has received positive feedback; and, the cost for the new HR financial and payroll system came in under \$25,000 per district.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the transfer of \$42,601 from Special Education account 1200-563 to Special Education account 1200-561. (Hancock, Graziano). Approved. Unanimous.

Joel Barlow High School Assistant Principal, Ms. Desmarais, reported on the Noteworthy News from JBHS. Highlights included: JBHS's athletic program was selected as a 2018-2019 CIAC Michaels Cup "Class Act" Sportsmanship recipient; the Music Department inducted 15 students into the Tri-M; five JBHS students participated in the 2019 Partners in Science, a cooperative program between Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals and area high schools; and Unified Wellness held a pumpkin carving class that was sponsored by the Redding Gardening Club.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. McMorran, reported that Laura Ponzio had recently left her position at ER9 and wanted to recognize her many years of service to the district. He also reported that the ER9 receptionist had also recently left her position and that they are re-thinking how to best staff this position. Dr. McMorran thanked Mr. Hancock, Mr. Hocker and Mr. Coppinger for their years of service to the board of education.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. D'Agostino thanked and commended the JBHS staff for how they handled a rumored incident on November 12. Ms. Graziano thanked Mr. Hancock, Mr. Hocker and Mr. Coppinger for their years of service to the Region 9 board. Ms. Graziano also reported that at a recent Budget Committee meeting they had discussions about the wellness program, class size and class offerings. She said it was all discussion, and no decisions yet.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education meeting be adjourned. (Hancock, Hocker). Approved. Unanimous.

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

Submitted by,
Chris Hocker, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by,
Sarah Ota