

*Filed subject to approval*

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING  
August 18, 2020 – 7:30 p.m.

Virtually Via Zoom - Access Link as Follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83084755289?pwd=d1F6NmNkSUNneFZJTnN4b01GOTdMZ09>

Meeting ID: 830 8475 5289

Passcode: 722689

Dial by your location: +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Johnston, Graziano, Berry, D'Agostino, Denny, William, O'Brien, Pampel

Administration: Pierson Ugol, Pin, Reiss

Others: 23 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary

CALL TO ORDER

After some technical difficulties with the recording function and the District's YouTube Channel, T. Johnston called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the July 21, 2020 Region 9 Board of Education regular meeting were reviewed.

**MOTION: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of July 21, 2020, Regular Meeting as submitted. (D'Agostino, Williams). Approved. Unanimous.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicole Frack, Blackrock Turnpike, Redding - Has a rising sophomore at Barlow, and had three comments:

- 1) She said that her biggest concern is the Wednesdays; she asked if there was some kind of collaborative platform that students could use on Wednesdays and/or some way to modify Wednesdays to make them more impactful;
- 2) She asked who would be monitoring the live-streaming from the classrooms; and,
- 3) On days that the students are home, N. Frack said that she is still confused about the daily schedule.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT: None.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol said that her report would be incorporated into the report on the School Reopening Plan that would be occurring later in the meeting.

Joel Barlow Head of School: Dr. Gina Pin, reported that JBHS faculty member Erin Pinsky had been selected by the New York Times for the "New York Times Teaching Project." This is a project that was recently announced by the New York Times in which 60 distinguished educators representing 29 states were chosen to participate. E. Pinsky's project for her students is titled, "Native American Experiences and Public Policy." An article detailing this project, "60 Talented Educators Join the New York Times Teaching Project," appeared in the August 12, 2020 edition of the New York Times.

Director of Finance & Operations: Scott Reiss reported that there were no transfers during this time period and that all was still on track for \$1.7M in unexpended funds. He said that he is in the process of closing out 2019-2020 and that this will be complete in the next couple of weeks. S. Reiss said that the health insurance claims for July are at approximately \$200K, which is much higher than last year, but not surprising given the recent availability of people to go to the doctor. He also said that the Central Office has been working with the new audit firm for the past six weeks and that their work is on track for a draft report in November and a final report in December.

#### BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Pension Committee: C. Graziano presented a brief report from the recent Committee Meeting of July 2, 2020, saying that they had reviewed the investment policy statement and had made no major changes, only an administrative name change; and that almost all of the losses from the beginning of the year had been recovered.

Curriculum Committee: C. Graziano reported that the Committee had met on August 11, 2020 and that staff walked them through a review of the humanities curriculum. She also said that agenda items for future Committee meetings will be the proposal for educational services and AP courses. Dr. Pierson Ugol added that Ed Advance had been hired as a consultant and that she hopes to have another consultant hired in an effort to have more than one viewpoint. She also said other proposals are being held-off for now so that our new leader -- Dr. Rydell Harrison -- can have a voice in this work.

Facilities and Fields Committee: M. D'Agostino reported that the Committee reviewed the Capital Plan and made revisions and updates in respect to priority and pricing.

**MOTION: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the revisions and accept the updated document as the approved capital plan. (D'Agostino, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.**

M. D'Agostino explained that the current wastewater treatment plant on the grounds of JBHS was in need of significant repair, but because the system is so outdated, parts are no longer available for the system.

**MOTION: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve funding for the equipment replacement and associated work necessary to maintain DEEP compliance and the wastewater treatment plant, not to exceed \$45,000, and to fund the project through the capital reserve. (D'Agostino, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.**

Policy Committee: M. Williams said that this Committee is working on a wholesale revision to the 2,000 page policy book. She also said that they continue to meet every Friday.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

Dr. Pin first thanked the public for all of their comments about reopening. She said that the plan is not complete and would not be complete until all of the staff and students were back in the building and they could try it. Dr. Pin said that the Central Office had extended the deadline for the parent survey, and that so far 92.6% of students are planning to participate in the hybrid learning model and 7.4% are planning to temporarily learn from home. She also reported that 94.2% of students do have access to a technology device, and that 5.7% do not have access to a technology device.

Dr. Pin highlighted changes to the Reopening Plan since it was last presented: parents should now access the Google form on the ER9 website to make decision changes; there is now a portable HVAC unit in the cafeteria and ventilation controls in the lower gym and restrooms; there is now a repurposed room within the nursing suite for isolation; visits to the nurse should be limited; visitors are not permitted; deliveries, contractors, etc. must wear masks; walking to the right will be encouraged and tape will delineate separation; there will be designated waiting areas, hallway monitors and hand sanitizer outside of restrooms; there will be two lunch waves; there will be assigned seating on the buses and buses will be cleaned daily; assignments will be posted on Google Classroom with unit objectives identified; attendance will be taken for every period for in-person and distance learning cohorts; semester one will not be separated into quarters; suggested supply list will be shared by administration in general and by teachers specifically; Fine & Practical Arts and Wellness teachers are working on implementation of protocols; and, the CIAC and CT Department of Health are still working on plan for the reopening of sports.

M. Pampel asked if there was yet any guidance about the procedure to be followed if a student tests positive for COVID-19. Dr. Pierson Ugol replied that the District had received guidance that the District's Nurse Coordinator was currently updating the flowchart for a Friday release. She added that they receive new information on an almost daily basis.

M. D'Agostino asked multiple questions:

1. Did 25% of parents respond in each grade or was that overall? Should we wait for new data from the current survey to have accurate numbers? He expressed concerns that we needed to know what people wanted and if there was a way to reach out to them if they did not respond.

Dr. Pin responded that families would be contacted and informed that they can change their minds with advance notice.

2. Concerns about the width of hallways. He approximated that they are 7 feet and the average student is 1.5 feet wide. How would they safely pass with enough space? Would we be able to stagger the kids?

Dr. Pin responded that there would not be staggering so students were not congregating to get into classrooms. They had ruled out the one-way hallways. They have considered not ringing bells to give non standardized staggering. K. O'Brien pointed out that there would be half as many students present.

3. Concerns about daily bus cleaning. Are buses cleaned only at the end of each day and not in between runs?

4. The portable HVAC system is an additional expense. Do we have alternative financing? He is worried that there will be additional expenses from the hybrid learning model that were not planned into the budget.

S. Reiss addressed that this is a fluid model and there will likely be savings from some areas and extra expenses in others. We are keeping an eye on the budget and will reassess in January. The one day of no busing should provide a 20% transportation savings.

5. How was the curriculum revision work done by teachers funded? Was this part of the budget or a new expense?

Dr. Pin replied that curriculum revision work is included in the budget every year. If additional funds are needed they would be requested from the central office. We have not exceeded the budget at this time. Teachers will be using Wednesday collaborative time to prepare for an all-in or all out scenario.

C. Graziano asked about the progress reports, especially for the seniors. Dr. Pin replied that the progress reports would be sufficient. Head of Guidance, Paula Panos, replied that she continues to speak with colleges and so far they all acknowledge that this will be a unique year.

T. Johnston said that he is concerned about: Wednesdays, as they seem unstructured; the teacher discretion about how long students need to stay in the Zoom classroom; and that there is not much student-teacher contact happening. He also acknowledged the extraordinary work being done by Dr. Pin and her administrative team.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATION FEES AND PARKING FEES

A lengthy discussion took place about whether or not to charge the entire \$150 per school year parking fee this school year, or, divide the fee into smaller amounts considering that the students will start the school year with a hybrid model.

**MOTION: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the administrative proposal to revise the parking fee structure for 2020-2021 to \$75.00 for fall semester, and revisit the fee for spring semester. (D'Agostino, Williams). Approved. Unanimous.**

M. Santangeli discussed that fall sports decisions would be on pause until 8/24 when a meeting between the Department of Public Health and the CIAC would occur. It was decided that if the various sports do run, then the participation fee should still be paid by the students.

Dr. Pin stated that student activities and clubs were continuing to run virtually and that participation fees would still apply.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Beth Natt, Maple Road, Easton - first said that Dr. Pin and team had done a great job. She asked how we are to deal with students who are sent home with COVID symptoms, who then have to wait the ten days to return to school.

Tracy Kulikowski, Drummer Lane, Redding - said that she would like the JBHS administration to address the timing of the Junior Writing Portfolio; that she has always felt that it is due too close to the final exam time.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

C. Graziano thanked the staff for their diligence and the BOE for all the late night Zoom meetings.

T. Johnston said that he does appreciate everyone's work. He also urged everyone to attend the Town Hall Meetings on the School Reopening Plan and that information about these meetings was emailed and is on the ER9 website.

Dr. Pierson Ugol added that an additional Town Hall Meeting will be held one week before schools reopen, and that a list of frequently asked questions will be emailed to families soon.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 p.m.

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

Recorded by,  
Sarah Ota