

*Filed subject to approval*

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons

On YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpOKinELAtzbYQcJ5NA3-hg>

November 15, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: D'Agostino, Johnston, O'Brien, Graziano, Denny, Lehberger, Pampel, Thompson

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Scrofani

Others: 2 members of the public, the recording secretary and the videographer

CALL TO ORDER

M. D'Agostino called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the October 18, 2022 Regular meeting as submitted. (Graziano, Pampel). Approved. Unanimous.**

STUDENT COMMENT

Joel Barlow High School Student Government Representative, Ben (Owen?) Fellows, read from the *Noteworthy News* report. Highlights included: 11 students were inducted into the Tri-M Music Society; several veterans from the surrounding community visited the school and spoke to students on Veteran's Day; Owen noted how meaningful it was to hear the Veterans speak and to personally meet them. Joe Sopko was honored as the JBHS Teacher of the Year; the Boys Cross Country team won the State Championship for Class M; the Athletics Department was once again selected as 2021-2022 CIAC Michael's Cup recipient; swimmer Audrey Gil broke three school records during swim meets in October and was named a GameTime CT Athlete of the Week; the Girls Cross Country team won the SWC Outstanding Sportsmanship Award; Head Boys Soccer Coach, Paul Winstanley, was selected as the 2022 CT High School Coaches Association Boys Soccer Coach of the Year; the Fall production of "Oklahoma!" was a big success; and, Homecoming Week was fun and had several well attended events and activities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alexis Bennett, Gallows Hill Road, Redding, said that she was speaking as a representative of the group working on the NEST project for the new facility that they plan to build near the Barlow football stadium. She said that they had received \$250K from an ARPA grant and that they had a very successful Fall Festival to raise funds and that they are still seeking additional private funds and sponsors for the project; she asked to be put on the agenda for the December BOE meeting.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

K. O'Brien said that she had attended the NEST Festival and it was an awesome family event. Thanks and congratulations to all the volunteers, vendors and students involved.

G. Denny said that perhaps the group should be on the agenda at a Facilities & Fields Committee meeting before a regular BOE meeting.

C. Graziano said that she had received a few emails voicing support for the NEST project and forwarded those emails to the other board members.

#### AGENDA CHANGE

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education add Agenda Item VII. F. Board Committee Reports to the meeting agenda. (Johnston, Graziano). Approved. Unanimous.**

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, said that there were two administrative reports for tonight's meeting.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol, reported on the recent K-12 Art & Music professional development day, saying that because of the pandemic they were a little behind in updating the curriculum and she believes that one more day of work is needed. She said the revisions in these areas were due to new standards that had been adopted by the State of Connecticut in art and music. Dr. Pierson Ugol said they are reengaging in the K-12 SRBI study work across the Districts. She said the plans will be consistent, but that the implementation will be different. Dr. Pierson Ugol also spoke about MTSS Implementation, saying that it is a multi-tiered system of support that integrates data and instruction to the benefit of students. BOE members had questions about the hiring of a math interventionist and whether or not course offerings in art and music would be changing. Dr. McKinnon said that a math teacher had been hired for the position and would be starting soon, and that he would get the information to the BOE. Dr. Pierson Ugol replied that course offerings in art and music would not change, but rather, some of the things the students do within the class might change. C. Graziano asked if there would be additional opportunities to coordinate and integrate the Art and Music curriculum into the extra curricular activities (for example with the play).

Director of Finance, Operations & Technology, Sara Scrofani, reported that: budget planning is ramping up; she's on track to close out last year; however, there are still some supply chain issues; she's keeping a close eye on this year's budget; she's tracking the bus credits with regard to all the bus issues we have had this year; within the new budget there will be the dollar amount of what was actually spent, so we will be able to have a better idea of each budget line; and, the health care claims were low, but she doesn't anticipate them staying low.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ASSET DELETION: MATH TEXTBOOKS

M. D'Agostino explained that these mathematics books (some of which are more than 20 years old) are being deleted. Dr. McKinnon said that the administration is careful with assets because we want to be careful with taxpayers' money and doesn't remove textbooks that are still effective and useful but that old books which are no longer used lead to clutter. Efforts will be made to see if some of these books can be donated.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the deletion of assets (outdated mathematics textbooks), according to Board policy, and encourage the administration to offer as donation to other school districts or organizations, in advance of disposal. (Denny, Graziano). Approved. Unanimous.**

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: AP COURSE OFFERINGS FOR 10TH GRADE STUDENTS**  
Dr. McKinnon distributed a memo to Board members and said that the administration is looking to add 10th graders to the courses of AP Computer Science Principle and AP U.S. Government & Politics. He said that these courses are challenging and students will need to be monitored. M. Pampel said that, according to Dr. Almeida, it is challenging to get the 10th graders into the AP courses because of scheduling, and that they will try their best to accommodate as many as possible. M. D'Agostino said that he'd like to see a holistic approach to the issue; find out what other DRG A schools are doing in terms of 10th graders taking AP courses and how other schools are integrating them into the curriculum. A lengthy discussion followed that included: since the AP U.S. Govt. & Politics course is one semester; what is the plan for the other semester; the foundation for these courses will need to begin in middle school; possibly the school schedule needs to be changed; the need to look at smaller districts too, not only DRG A; what, if any, requirements the two courses fulfill; what are the limitations and capabilities of the school; school staffing; budget impact; opening up existing AP courses vs. adding new AP courses; requirements and prerequisites for the two AP courses and any AP courses. Dr. McKinnon and Dr. Pierson Ugol said that the administration would be able to obtain data and information. Board members indicated that the AP topic requires a more holistic approach with additional planning in order to expand the offerings further.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the administration to update the Program of Studies for AP Computer Principles to include opportunities for 10th grade students beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year. Also, the Board accepts the addition of AP U.S. Government and Politics as a one-semester course available to students in grades 10-12, beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year. (Graziano, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.**

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: MASTERY BASED CREDIT OPTIONS**

Dr. Pierson Ugol said that at the Curriculum Committee Meeting, held the previous day, Dr. Almeida reported that there is a need for a short-term modification option for 3-4 students who are currently seniors and who are unlikely to be able to fulfill the "Beyond Barlow" criteria for graduation. She said that Dr. Almeida presented a solution to create a community service option for these students, which will require them to perform 10 hours of meaningful community service and that the Curriculum Committee was in agreement with this solution. A lengthy discussion followed which included: defining whether this path is only for these specific students or is it open to any students; the community service needs to be approved by administration and/or Guidance Department; the vast majority of students are on track to meet the mastery based credit; is this modification just for this one year; is this a deep enough level of time and commitment for the community service; is 10 hours enough time or should it be more hours; there is very little time left for this school year to add additional requirements; scheduling problems; should this be revisited for 11th graders when they are seniors; academic rigor cannot be sacrificed; some students suffered without their academic supports during the pandemic; there are specific requirements and guardrails for the community service; larger question is "how did this happen;" is community service commiserate with other options; the community service needs to be meaningful and important; M. Pampel "why is community service being regarded as a bad thing; community service is a valid part of applying your learning;" and, a report on the community service will need to be completed by the student when done. BOE members indicated that they would like the Curriculum Committee to discuss the concept

Page 3 of 5

more thoroughly and and at a later date give a further report that is more clearly defined. A motion was made by M. Pampel and seconded by G. Denny, which was then withdrawn after some rewording and input from BOE members.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education expand the “Beyond Barlow - Community portion of the approved Mastery Based Credit Plan” for the 2022-2023 academic year to include the option of 10 hours of Community Service in order to fulfill this graduation requirement; this offering requires administrative approval. (Denny, Pampel). Approved. 6-1-1. (Johnston opposed; Graziano abstained).**

Dr. McKinnon apologized for the lack of clarity on this issue and reiterated that the administration does have a desire for efficiency and clarity.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: STUDENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE: GOAL 1  
It was decided to table Dr. McKinnon’s presentation on this topic until the next BOE meeting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2023 REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING SCHEDULE

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the 2023 Region 9 Board of Education calendar, as amended. Amendments: February Meeting w/Budget Presentation - Thursday, February 23, 2023; new meeting start time of 7:00 p.m. (O’Brien, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Pension Committee: T. Johnston reported that the Committee had recently met and that the recommendation is to use \$177,385 as the starting number for the 2023-2024 operating budget. The reason for this, he said, is a decrease in the market. T. Johnston said that even though the pension fund is down 5%, it is still healthy and that underperformance is something which everyone is experiencing in the current market.

Curriculum: M. Pampel reported that there has been good progress occurring between faculty and parents with the chronic absenteeism problem.

Policy: S. Lehberger said that the Committee needs to know what the administrative priorities are in regard to tabled policies. She said she’d like to send Shipman & Goodwin the list of policies in order to know what we need to keep or eliminate.

Food Service: M. D’Agostino said that he heard the Food Service Committee is suggesting we raise the price of lunch; he said he is confused whether this decision is from the State or the District.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

C. Graziano said that she'd like to request that the Board review the student activity fund in the content of the overall budget.

K. Thompson said that she appreciated everyone's input and contributions on the Mastery Based Credit Option issue, and that the Curriculum Committee received last minute notice of the meeting and related information in order to be properly informed on the topic. She said she feels like we still don't have all the information and that she feels uncomfortable making recommendations to the Board under these circumstances and hopes that this will not be repeated.

M. Pampel said that she agrees with K. Thompson and that we all want to do what is best for the students.

M. D'Agostino said he appreciates the patience and collaboration from the Board tonight.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting be adjourned. (Johnston). Deemed approved with no objections.**

The Region 9 Regular Board of Education meeting was adjourned at 10:38 p.m.

Submitted by Karen O'Brien  
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by,  
Sarah Ota