

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION
September 20, 2016
MEETING
Minutes

INSTR # M2016000545
DATE FILED 09/27/2016 08:44:18 AM
CHRISTINE HALLORAN
TOWN CLERK
EASTON CT

Attendance - Region 9 Board of Education members – D’Agostino, Gombos, Hancock, Hocker, King, Lewis. Absent: Coppinger, Johnston
Administration: McMorran, Pierson Ugol, Sullivan, Pin, Desmarais, McTague, Santangeli
Student Representative:
Others: 6 members of the public and staff, representatives of *The Redding Pilot* and *Easton Courier*, and the videographer.

Mr. Hancock called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move to add Student Comment to the agenda as item 2A. Gombos, D’Agostino.
Approved. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of August 11, 2016, Special Meeting as submitted. Lewis, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

STUDENT COMMENT

Student representative, Maha Ulhaq spoke of the 9/11 ceremony held at the high school. Andrew Schur (grade 12) was the recipient of the Peter Hanson Award. She also spoke of upcoming events: Open House on September 22, 2016, PSATs for sophomores and juniors and NWEA testing for freshmen on October 19, 2016, (late arrival for seniors that day), CT Debate Team tournament on October 8, 2016, Tri-M Induction Ceremony for honors music students on October 20, 2016, an Easton/Redding PTA and Joel Barlow High School PTSA sponsored event is scheduled on October 17, 2016, at the Mark Twain Library at 7:00 pm – *Screenagers: Growing up in the Digital Age*. Student Steering Committee discussed problem with too many tests scheduled on same day. She also stated that the PTSA will be adding a student representative.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dana Grey, Redding: Stated she had read an article in a recent issue of *The Redding Pilot* about the boiler at Redding Elementary School and asked if the Board was aware that a similar boiler issue had occurred at Joel Barlow High School where a permit had not been obtained and a cease and desist order had been issued by the town. Concerned about the safety issues this involved. Feels administration is not being transparent.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Hocker stated that he attended the 9/11 ceremony at the high school and felt it was powerful.

Mr. D’Agostino asked for clarification on the boiler issue and said it is the first he is hearing about it.

Mrs. Gombos asked for a report from Director of Finance & Operations on the boiler. She also stated that based on everything she is hearing the school year is off to a great start.

Mr. Hancock stated he is hearing the same. Mentioned he had attended the convocation with the staff at the start of the year.

Mr. King also asked for clarification on the boiler comments.

DISCUSSION: PRESENTATION OF JOEL BARLOW HIGH SCHOOL'S 2016-2017 GOALS

Mrs. Pin spoke of new teacher hires and staff changes. She gave a presentation on the school goals for the current year focusing on communication, community and complexity. A student steering committee was formed to give more student voice. The presentation will be posted on the Board's Webpage.

DISCUSSION: TEACHER SUMMATIVE EVALUATION RATINGS FOR 2015-2016

Dr. McMorran stated that it is a statutory requirement that he report to the Board the teachers' summative evaluative ratings for 2015-2016. He gave a brief overview of the ER9 Teacher Evaluation Plan. Ratings were: 35 leader teachers; 53 effective teachers; two teachers on extended leaves were not rated; one teacher's evaluation was incomplete because the teacher left before the school year ended.

DISCUSSION: MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH INSTRUCTION

Dr. Pierson Ugol presented information regarding middle school math performance and instructional grouping strategies that will be used this year in the middle schools to yield improved math achievement. Flexible grouping and additional support will be provided to math classrooms based on student need. Groupings and support will not affect students' math level placement and the model's effectiveness will be monitored over the course of the year by the math leadership team and administration. She spoke of the data teams that are in place K-12 and feels the vertical focus and alignment will improve the students' transition from grade 8 to grade 9. Assistant Principal Julie McTague added that she is very excited about the work that is being done. She facilitated several work sessions with the K-12 math teachers.

DISCUSSION: STUDENT DATA PRIVACY PREPARATONS

Mrs. Sullivan provided a handout from Shipman & Goodwin on new state legislation: Public Act No. 16-189, An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy which was enacted in June, 2016 and goes into effect on October 1, 2016. It includes requirements for Boards of Education as well as contractors. It sets new standards for contracts relative to student data and the confidentiality of that data. Under the law, we must get a statement from the contractors indicating that they will not use our student data, will not retain the data and will be in compliance with FERPA. The legislation outlines how quickly contractors need to notify us of data breaches. Within five days of signing a contract with a vendor that uses student data, the District is required to notify the parents, providing a link to the contractor's website. Compliance initiatives have commenced with the development of an inventory of all the software, applications and websites currently in use that include student data. Information will be provided on the district Website explaining the legislation and how the district is responding to its requirements.

DISCUSSION: UPDATE CAPITAL PLAN

Mrs. Sullivan stated that this topic was discussed at the previous Facilities and Fields Committee without coming to a conclusion. The item will be added to a future Board meeting after the Facilities and Fields Committee has an opportunity to hold further discussions.

Mrs. Gombos asked if the school had received a cease and desist order from the town. Walter Czudak and Mrs. Sullivan stated they had not received one. Mr. Czudak added both boilers were permitted and inspected by the state; at no time was anyone ever in any danger. Mrs. Gombos asked Mr. Czudak to follow up with the town Building Department pertaining to the cease and desist order the member of the public stated had been issued to the school.

DISCUSSION: PROCESS FOR SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF BOND COUNSEL

Mr. Hancock requested this item be on the agenda for information purposes. He also stated that he would not be involved in the process because one potential bond counsel is his wife's firm. Mrs. Gombos asked if requests for proposals from potential firms would be sent out and then have presentations by those firms who respond. Mrs. Gombos stated she thought it would be advisable to start the process sooner rather than later. There have been issues with the current bond counsel that have cost the district money. Mr. King suggested that Mrs. Sullivan put together an outline of the process and present it at the next meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Head of School: Mrs. Pin distributed a staff analysis report including class sizes. She stated there was a positive, energized start of school. A NEASC report is due in October - the school's response to NEASC's recommendations. Mrs. Pin also distributed the special education and magnet school reports. Eight students are attending the RCA program. The school is working with the RCA program to avoid surprises as to the number of students who will attend in future years since it has a budgetary impact. Mrs. Gombos asked for a more detailed grade-level, age-level breakdown on the special education report in the future.

Mr. D'Agostino asked why the last quarter honor roll was not published. He also mentioned that Board members were not informed of the problem with receiving emails on mobile devices.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol reported that the K-12 science curriculum team met for five days in June.

Director of Finance & Operations: Mrs. Sullivan reported that the 2015-2016 year ended with an operating budget surplus of \$79,652 and requested that the Board transfer those funds into the Capital Reserve Fund. The current balance in the Capital Reserve Fund is \$331,349.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education transfer the 2015-2016 budget surplus of \$79,652 to the Capital Reserve Fund. King, Lewis. Motion withdrawn.

Mr. D'Agostino requested that the budget surplus be an agenda item. Mrs. Gombos agreed, stating that the public should understand how a surplus could be used before a decision is made on transferring the surplus to a specific fund. Mrs. Sullivan reported the Health Insurance account has a balance of \$338,214. Claims in July were \$173,000 and \$180,00 in August. She feels the account balance is where it should be. She stated a delay in making the decision on where to put the surplus would mean the draft audit report could not be presented in October. Mr. King withdrew his motion, understanding the draft audit report would not be available until November. Mrs. Sullivan also reported that notification was received from the Bridgeport Board of Education that they would be charging Region 9 \$32,000 next year for tuition for eleven students who attend their magnet school. She then informed the Board that the state is postponing the audit on the building project from October to December 6th.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran reported there was a great start to the school year.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee: Mr. King reported there was a meeting with the auditors, McGladrey (now named RSM). He asked the auditors to particularly look into the Student Activities Fund. Travel and meeting expenses and legal expenses were also reviewed.

Cost Comparison Committee: A cost comparison against similar school districts was done with information culled from the other districts by Mrs. Sullivan. Expects to present findings at October meeting more detailed than just a per pupil cost.

Pension Committee: The Pension Committee acts as trustee of the Pension Plan for the Board. Mr. King reported that the pension plan is for the non-certified staff – currently 117 participants. Annual contribution for 2017-2018 will increase by \$31,000 based on one of the actuary's recommendations. Significant change - switched from an interest rate on plan's liabilities from 7.25% to 6.75% and salary scale from an anticipated 5% increase to 4% in determining the Board's annual contribution. \$300,000 has been contributed in the past several years.

Facilities and Fields Committee: Mr. D'Agostino reported that the committee met prior to this meeting. The administration's request for additions to the Capital Plan was reviewed. The committee is waiting for additional information before making a recommendation to the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dana Grey, Lamppost Road, Redding: Thanked Dr. Pierson Ugol for her report and the work being done in math instruction.

(Individual's Name Inaudible): Asked about the parking fees at Barlow.

Mrs. Gombos stated that the fees were instituted to help with maintenance costs. The Board is required by law to provide a bus seat for each student whether the student drives his/her own vehicle or not. \$150 fee has been in place since the completion of the building project.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move to have Board Member Comment on the agenda before Executive Session. D'Agostino, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Hocker commented that the Board has historically paid close attention to the Pension Fund and wisely funded it. Mr. Lewis also commented that no new employees are being added to this Pension Plan. Due to recent negotiations, the new employees will be enrolled in a 401(a) Pension Plan established by the Board.

Mr. D'Agostino asked if there is an unusually high number of students on a waiting list for a parking space. He also asked if there is a rule in place that a certain number of tardy students impacts parking privileges.

Mrs. Pin stated that right now there is no waiting list. There is a postponement of parking privileges for accumulated unexcused tardy students. This also applies to other privileges such as sports participation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education recess the meeting to an Executive Session for discussion of the School Safety Plan. D'Agostino, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

Redding Police Chief Fuchs, Easton Police Chief Shaw, Gina Pin, Dr. McMorran, and Peggy Sullivan were invited to the Executive Session.

The meeting recessed at 9:43 pm.

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:45pm.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education meeting be adjourned. Lewis, King.
Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 pm.

Submitted by,
Catherine Gombos
Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Vicki Cram