

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 15, 2016

Minutes

Attendance:

Region 9 Board of Education members: Coppinger, D'Agostino, Gombos, Hancock, Hocker, King, Lewis
Administration: McMorran, Sullivan, Pin, Pierson Ugol, Sheehy, Geraghty, and additional members of the
leadership team

Others: ten members of the public, a representative Redding Pilot/Easton Courier, and the videographer

Mr. Hancock called the meeting of the Region 9 Board of Education to order at 7:33 pm in the Joel Barlow
Media Center.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Gillian Saunders provided a report on student activities that included the success of the St. Baldrick's event
which raised more than \$23,000. The Robotics Team, Josh Panos, Gillian Saunders and Nicholas Ferrante,
provided a demonstration and thanked the board of Education for their support and service on the board.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. McMorran, acknowledging that it is Board of Education appreciation month, thanked the board
members for their service to the school and their communities.

Dr. McMorran announced that the Region 9 Board of Education had completed their work as a search
committee and announced the appointment of Gina Pin as the Assistant Superintendent and Head of
School.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 9, 2016
meeting as corrected. Gombos, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.**

Correction/addition: Add the following motion which was made at the meeting, but omitted in error from
the minutes.

Motion: move that the minutes of the March 1, 2016, meeting be approved. Coppinger, Hocker. Approved.
7-0-1. Mr. King abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gowan Dacey, Easton: Mr. Dacey thanked the Board for having the meeting videos available on the
website, thanked Dr. McMorran for his commentary at the last meeting on First Amendment rights,
congratulated the Debate Team, and acknowledged student Emmett LiCatri for his success in wrestling.
Mr. Dacey expressed his concerns about the replacement of lighting fixtures with LED fixtures at all five
schools without approval of the boards of education. He stated that the project should have gone through a
competitive bid process. He asked that the Region 9 Board of Education review the process and put a
policy in place so that this type of thing does not happen in the future.

Burt Webb, Redding: Mr. Webb commented that \$750,000 was expended for the replacement of the light
fixtures without the knowledge and approval of the boards of education and without a competitive bid
process. He asked that the Region 9 Board of Education take steps to correct the matter.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Coppinger asked for an explanation of the light fixture replacement and response to the comments by
the public.

Mr. D'Agostino commented that it is important to recognize students for athletic achievements.

Mrs. Gombos suggested that the Director of Finance prepare a response to the comments made in public session for the next meeting.

Mr. Lewis commented on the success of the Debate Team and their upcoming session on April 2, 2016.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON BOARD COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMUNITY REGARDING THE BUDGET

Mrs. Sullivan circulated a copy of the communication with explanatory text used last year. The document is to be prepared by the Board Secretary, approved by the Board and the board's attorney. The communication will need to be in the mail by April 11, 2016

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the Board of Education Secretary to prepare an explanatory flyer for distribution. D'Agostino, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON POLICY 5131.6

This was the second reading of Policy 5131.6, Drug Use, Drugs and Tobacco. Changes to the document were reviewed. Mr. D'Agostino noted that the Policy Committee and board counsel completed their review of the document and recommend approval.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 5131.6 with the alternate language in Section g and additional language in Section h. D'Agostino, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Assistant Superintendent and Head of School: Mrs. Pin had planned to have student Nikki Kearney read her poem at the meeting, but she is competing in the State Finals tonight. The Robotics team had one of their best performances at competition in the four years of the program. The Connecticut SAT School Day was administered on Wednesday, March 2, 2016, with 258 juniors taking the new test. St. Baldrick's day was held on March 7th, with 38 shaves representing 18 students, 9 Barlow staff members and 11 community members. A grand total of \$23,000 was raised. Mr. Santangeli added that 15 of the 18 cheerleaders qualified for Honors or High Honors for the second quarter of the year. Emmett LiCastri concluded his final wrestling season at Barlow, with a total of 182 wins and a fifth place overall for the number of all-time wins in CT high school wrestling.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol also reported that the Tri-State Consortium committee revisited the schools to review their visit of two years ago. They had very positive comments on what was being done to produce authentic work. Mr. D'Agostino requested that changes in curriculum be presented to the board on a regular basis.

Director of Finance: Mrs. Sullivan consulted with board counsel regarding the \$60,000 refund from the Town of Bethel for the taxes issue and was advised that there were no restrictions on the use of the funds, but that the funds must first be recognized as revenue in FY15-16. The State has now received two missing documents regarding the old Building Project and the next step is the audit. Regarding the Roof Project, a small payment is expected this month and Mrs. Sullivan is waiting for the State to approve the change order so that the final paperwork can be filed.

Mrs. Sullivan provided detailed information on the replacement of lighting fixtures at all five schools. The work was done by a State approved vendor and in cooperation with Eversource & UI. An inventory was done in each of the schools by the vendor, and Eversource or UI confirmed that work and what items were to be replaced. At Barlow, a total of 2,377 fixtures were replaced for a total cost of \$330,000. A grant from

Eversource covered \$133,000 of the cost, with the remainder taken as an interest free loan from Eversource, to be paid back from electrical usage savings over a 3-year period. Mrs. Sullivan estimated the savings to date is about 6%. In addition, she noted that there will be a savings from lower maintenance costs. Mrs. Gombos requested additional detail on the amount of electrical usage over the past three years, for a comparison with the current usage. Mr. Czudak noted that while Eversource people were on site, they looked at other building systems and determined that all were in good shape. He added that the new lighting is much better, both on the interior and exterior. An added benefit is that more lighting can now be tied into the generator for use in the event of an emergency.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran provided copies of a publication by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents highlighting the group's position on education, budgets, special education, personalized learning, and evaluation of administration and teachers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation Committee: Mr. Coppinger reported the Committee authorized Mrs. Sullivan to go back to the bus company for additional savings. There was also discussion of the potential of building a bus depot on a site in Easton and how that change would impact the contract negotiations. This will be an agenda item for discussion at the Joint Boards meeting on May 17, 2016.

Pension Committee: Mr. Coppinger reported the fee structure has been changed from a commission based fee to a flat fee basis in order to garner some savings. The Investment Policy statement was also reviewed.

Audit Committee: Mr. King reported the next meeting is March 22 and the group will review the activity fund, legal expenses, and expense reports of contract employees. The Procurement Policy has been referred to the Policy Committee for review. Mr. King noted that he will refer the matter of the \$60,000 tax payment refund to Auditor Scott Bassett for his input.

Policy Committee: Mr. D'Agostino reported the committee reviewed a number of policies that need to be updated. These will be brought to the board for approval soon.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gowan Dacey, Easton: Mr. Dacey commented that he understands the electrical rebates and the advantages of the changes, but he questioned the process. He also suggested that the repayment of the loan should be classed as a debt, not a lower electric bill.

Jeanne Wendschuh, Redding: Mrs. Wendschuh commented that Emmett LiCastri and his father were very helpful last fall in moving books for the Mark Twain Library Book Fair.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Lewis, commenting on the lighting replacement, commented that the process should be more transparent.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meetings were adjourned at 9:01 pm

Submitted by Catherine Gombos, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday