

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION
December 15, 2015
MEETING
Minutes

Attendance: Region 9 Board of Education members: Coppinger, D'Agostino, Gombos, Hancock, King, Lewis

Administration: McMorran, Sullivan, Pin, Pierson Ugol, Sheehy, Geraghty, and members of the Leadership team

Student Representative: Sarah Jorgensen

Others: 10 members of the public and staff, a representative of the Redding Pilot/Easton Courier, and the videographer

Dr. McMorran called the meeting of the Region 9 Board of Education to order at 7:08 pm in the Joel Barlow Media Center.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move to alter the agenda, moving the Election of Officers to the next agenda item. Gombos, D'Agostino. Approved. Unanimous.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Motion: move to nominate Vance Hancock for Chairman for a two year term. Gombos, Lewis. Dr. McMorran tabulated the written votes, and announced the vote was unanimous.

Mr. Hancock presided over the remaining meeting.

Motion: move to nominate Mike D'Agostino as Vice Chairman for a two year term. Gombos, Coppinger. Dr. McMorran tabulated the written votes, and announced the vote was unanimous.

Motion: move to nominate Catherine Gombos as Secretary for a two year term. D'Agostino, Lewis. Dr. McMorran tabulated the written votes, and announced the vote was unanimous.

Motion: move to nominate Paul Coppinger as Treasurer for a two year term. Gombos, Lewis. Dr. McMorran tabulated the written votes, and announced the vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the November 24, 2015 meeting as corrected. Approved. Unanimous.

Correction: page 1, on the motion to approve the invoice for Imperial Roofing, the vote was 5-0-1. Mr. D'Agostino abstained; on page 2, last paragraph, line 2, change ship to shift.

STUDENT REPORT

Student Representative, Sarah Jorgensen, reported on student activities, including the music events, Poetry Out Loud finals, Math Team and Chess Team. Upcoming events include the Community Carol sing on December 22 and the Mr. Barlow event.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Julie Thome, Redding: Mrs. Thome spoke in support of the French student trip to Paris.

Janet Ryan Jones, Redding: Mrs. Jones also spoke in support of the trip to Paris.

Hans Schuumans, Easton: Mr. Schuumans spoke in support of the trip to Paris.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. King requested a discussion of enrollment and the impact of the decline on the budget.

AGENDA ADDITION

Motion: move to add to the agenda a Discussion on Enrollment. D'Agostino, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON CAPITAL PROJECT INVOICE

Mrs. Sullivan submitted an invoice from Imperial Roofing for \$6,175 for work completed during the month of November. She noted that the final invoice for the work, the retainage, has also been received, but she is not submitting it at this time because the final work on the project has not been completed. The Building Committee did not have a quorum for their meeting prior to this meeting, but those present discussed the matter. The remaining work needs to be completed and the final Certificate of Occupancy paperwork must be completed. Those members of the Building Committee present agreed that they could not recommend payment for either of the open invoices. Based on the discussion, the sentiment of the board members was that the lack of progress in December, the open issues, and the lack of a Certificate of Occupancy, they could not approve the invoice.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the invoice from Imperial Roofing for November work for \$6,175. King, Lewis. NOT approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON UPDATE OF TRIP TO PARIS

Mrs. Pin reported that since the terrorist events in Paris, the State Department has issued a worldwide travel alert. The alert is set to expire on February 24, 2016. The planned trip for the French students to Paris is planned for February 11 to February 20, 2016. She asked the board to revisit the planned trip.

Mr. Smith, French teacher, described the trip and itinerary. He also presented options to alter the planned trip. A cancellation of the trip would cost about \$1,200 per student. An option to reschedule the trip to April would incur additional expenses for the students. Another option was to change the destination. To date only one student has cancelled, resulting in a travel group of 23 students and 4 Barlow teachers.

Discussion of insurance coverage and liability followed. Board members were in agreement that the safety of the students was the most important factor.

Mrs. Gombos suggested the Quebec option be explored. She noted that students have the opportunity to travel internationally outside the auspices of the school, adding that she is not in favor of school-sponsored international trips.

Mr. Coppinger spoke in favor of these types of opportunities, but was concerned about the liability issues. He suggested the parents should be requested to sign a document that would release the school board of liability. Mr. King noted that, while this is a good idea, he was doubtful it would hold up in a court of law.

Dr. McMorran expressed his deep concern for the safety of the students and staff. Another option would be to go forward unaffiliated with the school, removing the 4 teacher chaperones, and having the parents arrange for chaperones or chaperone themselves.

Other board members expressed their concerns. Mr. Lewis felt the trip should go forward, that we should not be intimidated by terrorists or fears. Mr. D'Agostino commented that the decision is not based on the financial impact, and asked that the parent sign a contract that they are aware of the global situation.

Conclusion: the Board of Education took no action on the matter, and the trip will continue as planned.

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: Accommodation and Modifications

Special Education Director, Patti Roszko, provided descriptions and information on the differences between Accommodations and Modifications in relation to special services. Accommodations are changes that help a student overcome or work around his/her disability and are a part of the student's IEP. Modifications are a change in what is being taught to the student or what is expected of the student.

DISCUSSION: 2016-17 BUDGET, PART 1

Dr. McMorrان presented information or background of factors that impact the preparation of the budget. He stressed the importance of education, the relationship between education and the student potential and suggested a review of the strategic vision for education in Redding & Easton. Dr. McMorrان will be back next month to discuss how to continue the good work the schools are doing and what it will cost to continue that work.

Board members provided comments regarding the upcoming budget process:

Mr. Lewis noted the decline in enrollment and suggested that proposed budget should be in the range of a negative 2-3%

Mrs. Gombos asked that the administration take a long range view, at least three years, with a plan that will address the decline in enrollment.

Mr. King requested a history of budget increases over the last four years.

Mr. D'Agostino asked that the budget maintain what is valued, but with appropriate reductions.

Mr. Coppinger commented that a 3-5 year plan will be needed to show how the budget is reacting to the decline in enrollment.

Mr. Hancock added that there is a need to show both towns that the budget is reflecting the decline in enrollment.

DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF 2016 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Board meeting schedule: Mrs. Gombos suggested changing or eliminating the August 23, 2016 meeting.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the 2016 meeting schedule, including the elimination of the August 23, 2016, meeting, as discussed. D'Agostino, King. Approved. Unanimous.

Pension Committee schedule: no changes

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the 2016 meeting schedule as reviewed. King, D'Agostino. Approved. Unanimous.

Financial Advisory Committee schedule: Mr. Lewis suggested that this committee, structure and purpose be discussed further at a future meeting.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the 2016 meeting schedule, including the elimination of the August 23, 2016 meeting, as discussed. Coppinger, D'Agostino. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION OF ENROLLMENT

Mr. Lewis provided a spreadsheet that of enrollment data from 2004 to 2025. Actual and projected enrollment was noted. The enrollment for 2016-17 is projected at 964, and further declining in 2017-18 to 886.

Dr. McMorran, responding to Mr. King's request for budget increase history provided the following:

Budget 2015-16, 1.97%
2014-15, 1.07%
2013-14, 1.97%
2012-13, 1.49%
2011-12, 2.3%
2010-11, 2.76%

REPORTS

Principal's Report: Mrs. Pin reported on the change in the School-wide Expectations reporting to parents at the end of each semester. The goal is to improve communication and provide actionable feedback about strengths and areas for growth. The school-wide expectations include the skills, attributes, and habits of the mind that is held to be important across the disciplines and beyond academic classes. She also announced that the Weller Foundation is continuing to support education and provided the funding for the purchase of a 3-D printer. The STEM students are enjoying this technology.

Mr. D'Agostino commented that the board of education needs to formally accept and acknowledge donations.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accepts with gratitude the donation of funds by the Weller Foundation for a 3-D printer. D'Agostino, King, Approved. Unanimous.

Special Education Report: Ms. Roszko provided the statistical report. She noted there has been very little change since the last meeting.

Financials and Operation: Mrs. Sullivan reported on the following items:

- Health Insurance: claims are running as projected. The Easton Board's claims are down considerably from September, but they are borrowing from the Reserve Fund. Mrs. Sullivan will meet with the Easton Board of Finance with year-end projections and a request for an additional appropriation for their Reserve Fund.
- Mrs. Sullivan will meet with Anthem and Segur in January to get health insurance projections for the next year.
- Transfer Report: there were no transfers this month.
- A sale of short term notes is planned for Thursday.
- Food service: Mrs. Sullivan attended a workshop on the school lunch program. The district will go out to bid in February, with responses scheduled for March. The State is still working on the RFP (Request for Proposal) to be used for bidding.
- Old Building Project closeout: Mrs. Sullivan has been checking with the State on this issue each week and has not received a definitive response.

Assistant Superintendent's Report: Dr. Pierson Ugol submitted a written report and reported on the change at the federal level from No Child Left Behind to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The change means greater control at the state and local level, and less emphasis on standardized testing.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran commented that the CT Association of Superintendents is concerned about the state deficit, the potential reductions in Excess Cost for education, reduced support for the regional educational service centers, and reductions in municipal aid.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum Committee: Mr. Lewis reported on two recommendations for adoption by the Board of Education.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approved a change of course name, from Adaptive Physical Education to Unified Wellness. Lewis, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the return of a number of elective classes, currently restricted to grade 12, to be open to both grades 11 & 12. Lewis, D'Agostino. Approved. Unanimous.

The Curriculum Committee also discussed a proposal for an alteration of grades for the Honors and AP courses. The proposal will be reviewed by the Policy Committee and discussed further by the board.

Calendar Committee: Mr. D'Agostino reported calendar for 2016-17 will be essentially the same as the current year calendar. The final calendar will include the seven minimum days and one late arrival for professional development. The calendar will be approved at the January Tri-Board meeting.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hancock reported the review of policies will begin in December.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dana Gray, Redding: Mrs. Gray offered her support for the change in grading for the Honors and AP courses.

Hans Schuumans, Easton: Mr. Schuumans expressed his concerns about the board's discussion of student safety and the trip to Paris. He also believes the budget should reflect the decline in enrollment.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Gombos requested that the Central Office budget be circulated prior to the next board meeting.

Mr. Coppinger commented that he is pleased the French trip is moving forward. He also commented on the successes of the Debate Team.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

This was cancelled.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the meeting be adjourned. King, Lewis. Approved. Unanimous.

The meetings were adjourned at 9:45 pm

Submitted by Catherine Gombos, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday