

Filed subject to approval

EASTON, REDDING, REGION 9 JOINT BOARDS OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons

On YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRtQ6dze5a8x5XT5LzBnDHA>

October 25, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Easton: Hicks, Wible, de Jesus, Parker, Stinson, Young

Redding: Parkin, Hoffman, Shanahan, Gibbons via remote

Region 9: D'Agostino, Johnston, O'Brien, Lehberger, Pampel

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Scrofani

Others: 6 members of the JBHS studentbody, the recording secretary and the videographer

CALL TO ORDER

R. Hicks called the Easton Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

C. Parkin called the Redding Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

M. D'Agostino called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, introduced his report, Charting the Course: Developing a Strategic Plan for the ER9 Schools, and said that the objective of the Joint BOE meeting was to collect Board input into some of the work done so far on this plan. He said that focus groups had been conducted this past Spring with teachers, students and community members, and he read through several comments made by these groups.

Six JBHS students – Carolyn Robey, Owen Fellows, Quinn Speck, Lila, Christine Robey and Sean McTague – were in attendance to further discuss some of the questions posed during the focus groups. The students were asked: What are some ways we could have better prepared you? In sum, their responses included: encouraging creativity; being taught to embrace more solutions; problem solving is too much of a single topic; more collaborative problem solving; group work is often “low level work.”

The students were asked: “In terms of opportunities to study your interests, how can we improve?” In sum, their responses included: students have to try and then they’ll have the opportunities; options are not always made aware to students; more students need to take part in “Senior Passages;” teachers and counselors can play a key role; programs need to be promoted more; something that is offered last semester of your senior year is too rushed; opportunities should be multi-year; you develop a passion for

something over time; during the 6th and 8th grade “Cornerstone” project, we were told what we could and could not do.

The students were asked: What should the ideal school look like? In sum, their responses included: it should be a place to take risks and not be afraid to fail, and to have the confidence to do both; where you can explore your interests and still make yourself marketable; a place that stops the conformity of setting a standard for good grades; think about whether or not grades are the best way to judge kids; have a grade standard that is appropriate to everyone’s goals; enrichment of the idea of grades; students respecting learning and then wanting to be there to make progress; expand the area of study and interest in school will grow too.

At the conclusion of the student feedback, Joel Barlow Head of School, Dr. Mario Almeida, gestured toward the students and commented that, “this is what makes a great school.” Dr. McKinnon and BOE members thanked the students for their participation and they departed.

Dr. McKinnon continued with the strategic plan presentation saying that, with the data collected, they were able to identify connections between major themes and were able to rank the major themes for priority. The major themes (in rank order) are: authentic, mental health, real world, problem solving, working independently, safe/valued, interests explored, group work, healthy spaces, collaborating, learning environment, social/emotional, communication and make mistakes. Dr. McKinnon asked BOE members to take 10 minutes to review the rankings and the ER9 priority list (that they had available to them electronically) and to add any additional areas to the tab assigned to their respective BOE. He said they would then share any additions, but that tonight’s meeting was not for discussion of individual priorities or to prioritize one area.

BOE member comments included: ensure consistency as it relates to opportunities presented to students; communicating about opportunities; what are we doing to make sure kids are not left out of engagement; less dramatic transitions from school-to-school; making sure every student graduates with skills for college or non-college route; great that we’re thinking outside the box, but we still need the fundamentals and essentials; drive engagement through experiences will result in interest, motivation and academic success; every student who spoke talked of teacher impact; is there a way to make grades more thoughtful and insightful; what is good homework, what is homework; group work, should be working on it over the years so they know how to do it; development of an integrated, alternative program could change outcomes for students; dual enrollment, such as at colleges and on-line; flex hours for learning credits; all learners should be the focus, not just SpEd, gifted and elite athletes and musicians; student mentoring program; communication between teachers and students is what is going to motivate them; collaboration between the middle schools and between the teachers of the different schools; everything on priority list is relevant to all of the District schools; consistency of communication across teachers and buildings; how much time and flexibility is there for students to explore their own interests; address the disconnect between taking a class for “learning,” and taking a class for “my interest;” marketing themselves for college vs. taking classes that they want to; students don’t come to the high school and suddenly develop a love of learning; seems that there’s a large group of students who still don’t know what they’re interested in; more opportunities to do things after school that are not for grades; parent partnership is necessary for this and critical for helping students figure out what they’re interested in and to drive their enthusiasm; and offering a breadth of educational opportunities is important.

Dr. McKinnon said for BOE members to also use the survey sent to them to share more ideas, and asked that the survey be completed by the end of next week. He said that he will have the strategic plan finalized for the January 2023 Joint BOEs meeting.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

D. Wible said that the next DEI Task Force will meet on December 5, 2022 at 7:00pm in the JBHS Library Learning Commons.

J. Stinson said that the Joint Policy Committee: will meet this Friday at 8:00am; had moved to a monthly cadence; hopes to move to a quarterly cadence soon; and is now looking at the new Shipman & Goodwin policies.

R. Hicks said that as a member of the Transportation Committee, he will take the initiative in Easton to renew talks about a bus depot for the District.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

C. Parkin thanked the administration for the thoughtful presentation and said that he feels as if there's considerable momentum in the right direction. He also introduced new Redding BOE member, Jon Shanahan.

D. Wible thanked the administration and the students who attended the meeting. She said that she thinks it was a really good idea to have had the students in the room, and that it would be lovely to hear from students more often.

J. de Jesus said that this meeting had been her favorite BOE meeting because of the students and also because she was leaving with hope for what the future holds for our children, the plans and the changes for the better.

J. Stinson thanked the administration and said that he loved the focus on student outcomes. He also spoke about the recent Cyber Patriot competition where Barlow's 11th and 9th grade teams had excellent performances, and the Easton/Redding middle school team came in first for the entire state in the middle school category.

S. Lehberger thanked the administration and the students who attended and said that this had been her favorite Joint BOE meeting. She said that she loves that we have room for improvement on things and that shows that we have room for growth.

M. D'Agostino thanked the administration and said that an unified approach that unites the Districts and finds a common path forward is refreshing. He said that he is encouraged and confident that we have an administrative team that recognizes that we have areas where we can improve, overcome them and move forward.

R. Hicks said that he echoes everybody's sentiments.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education Regular meeting be adjourned (Wible, de Jesus).
Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education Regular meeting be adjourned (Hoffman,
Cunningham). Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting be adjourned (O'Brien,
Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Submitted by Devon Wible
Secretary, Easton Board of Education

Recorded by,
Sarah Ota