

Filed subject to approval

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

April 27, 2021 - 7:30 p.m.

Held Remotely Pursuant to Executive Order No. 7B

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91619868894?pwd=VnpsZUtHbnFuVWdTUUVzTGRTclcwZz09>

Meeting ID: 916 1986 8895 - Passcode: 192459

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Johnston, Graziano, Berry, D'Agostino, Denny, O'Brien, Pampel, Williams
Administration: Harrison, Pierson Ugol, Pin, Zachery
Others: 12 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

T. Johnston called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 11, 2021 Region 9 Board of Education Regular Meeting; the March 16, 2021 Region 9 Board of Education Regular Meeting; the April 8, 2021 Region 9 Board of Education Special Meeting; and, the April 19, 2021 Region 9 Board of Education Special Meeting as submitted. (Graziano, D'Agostino).
Approved. Unanimous.

STUDENT COMMENT

JBHS Student Government Representative, Max Monson, read from the *Noteworthy News* report about recent accomplishments of Barlow students in the areas of theatre and debate. He also said that there are now many more activities happening at Barlow, including sports, theatre and concerts, and that things are getting back to a little more normalcy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dana Benson, Pond Road, Easton, said that he hopes that at some point there will be a discussion on the survey about diversity.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

M. D'Agostino said that he'd like to commend the students and the staff on their resilience.

T. Johnston spoke about the recent *U.S. News & World Report* article about the best high schools in the nation. He said that JBHS has been ranked 16th in the State of Connecticut and 709th in the nation.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Rydell Harrison, first reported that Region 9 has determined after an investigation that former teacher and Athletic Director, Pam Goodpaster, engaged in inappropriate conduct with a student in the 1970's. Based on this determination, Region 9 is removing honoraria related to Ms. Goodpaster. Region 9 has reported the information to all of the appropriate authorities, but given the passage of time we do not expect any further action. Rather than removing the honoraria related to Ms. Goodpaster without any explanation, the District concluded that it was important to be transparent with the community with the reason. Dr. Harrison said that the District will not be able to provide any additional details.

Dr. Harrison said that the District's ESSER II grant for COVID response and recovery was submitted this week, will be in the amount of around \$85,000, and that it will be used in the following four areas: 1) academic support; 2) learning loss; 3) learning acceleration; 4) learning recovery. He said they will assemble a small and diverse acceleration team who will plan and lead around acceleration. Dr. Harrison said that all three Districts will be a part of the Acceleration Improving Community and that this will allow us an opportunity to exchange ideas and work with other Districts. He said that this summer they plan to broaden summer learning beyond core contact and offer enrichment opportunities to students. Dr. Harrison said that the District will be submitting the ESSER III grant soon, and that next week is Staff Appreciation Week and that he looks forward to celebrating them and all the tremendously hard work they've done over the past year. M. D'Agostino asked that a plan for the use of the ESSER II grant and all other current and future grants be shared with the BOE at the next meeting. Dr. Harrison replied that they will have the numbers by the next meeting and will be able to share this information.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Pierson Ugol, reported that the ESSER grant will be used to support student teachers and academic interns. She said that all interns were put on hold this year because of COVID. Dr. Pierson Ugol was asked the following about the interns: are they still in school, how much do they work and what does the grant money have to do with the interns. She replied that most interns have completed their coursework and need to do their student teaching; they become the building sub after their student teaching; and, that each intern costs \$15K though their college program. C. Zachery added that the interns serve as subs throughout the building and that this is a way to identify talent for the District.

Director of Finance & Operations, Clarence Zachery, displayed the new EFinance Budget Object Summary report; it now has categories for: 2019-2020 Actual Expenditures, 2020-2021 Budget, 2020-2021 MTD, 2020-2021 YTD Expenditures, 2020-2021 Encumbered, 2020-2021 Anticipated Expenditures, 2020-2021 Unexpended Budget, and YTD Budget %. C. Zachery explained that the unexpended amount is about \$250K, and is the amount they expected to be at; and that most of the anticipated expenditures are salaries, health care claims and social security. C. Graziano asked if there was any sense of what might be moved around. C. Zachery said that some of the unexpended funds could be used for staff retirement obligations, such as sick-day payouts. M. D'Agostino asked for a report on monies that were transferred and what these monies were used for once they were transferred. He said that any transfers over \$10K require BOE approval. C. Zachery responded that that may be the policy for Region 9, but not for Central Office. C. Zachery reported that the Anthem system data lag was now updated and that Region 9 is in a good position. He said the three-month average is approximately \$150K, which is slightly over the YTD average, but lower than the three-year average.

C. Zachery said that fund balance is currently at \$520,530 and that Region 9 is in a healthy position. A further discussion took place on the reserve balance, including: starting point, how much is going to be leftover, and how and when the monies come from the towns. A more in-depth discussion took place as to why \$16K was transferred from transportation into equipment non-instructional. Dr. Pin said that per Transfer Policy 31-60, up to \$25K is allowed to be transferred by the Superintendent; she also said per Transfer Policy 33-20, more than \$25K can be transferred by Superintendent if it is for health & safety. She further explained that this transfer was from athletic transportation to fund new mats for the gym, which is athletic health & safety. M. Agostino said that he appreciated the explanation, but that he does not accept it; he said it would be better if the topic was discussed at another meeting. T. Johnston said that transfers would be a topic at a future meeting.

Director of Special Services, Michael DeStefano, thanked his entire staff for their hard work and acknowledged Teaching Assistant, Katie Moyse, for her exemplary work with a wide range of students and classes. He reported on the success of a recent Parent/Staff Seminar and said that two more will be held in the near future. M. DeStefano said that ESY planning is well underway and that this summer they will not be able to hold the program in conjunction with middle school programs because of COVID concerns and work being conducted on the JBHS building. He reported that there have been 26 SpEd referrals -- up from 12 last school year -- and, to date, eight are eligible; he also said that a referral does not mean an eligibility. M. DeStefano said that there has been a big increase in the number of 504s, anxiety and depression among the students; Paula Panos, Director of Guidance Counseling, concurred with this assessment. M. DeStefano said that outplacement numbers have remained stable and that he had applied for a grant to support staff in conducting student assessments during off-time and the summer. M. D'Agostino asked if there is the money to support the increase of struggling students that he is expecting for next school year. M. DeStefano replied that his department is doing everything they can to plan for the increase in 504s and that they are equipped to handle it.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee: M. Williams said that they are trying to get into compliance with the policy that will be discussed later in the meeting. She also said that recently they had a Policy meeting that focused on good governance for the Tri-Board meetings and she was glad that many BOE members did attend.

Pension: C. Graziano said that the meeting had been cancelled because there was nothing to report.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: POTENTIAL CHANGE TO PROPOSED REGION 9 2021-2022 OPERATING BUDGET

T. Johnston explained that a technical edit was needed on the approved 2021-2022 budget; one town rounded up and one town rounded down in the budget numbers.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the adjusted 2021-2022 budget in the amount of \$24,595,254. (Williams, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

M. D'Agostino said that he wanted more specifics on the error and reassurance that it will not happen again. C. Zachery said that all parties had some responsibility. C. Graziano agreed with C. Zachery's assessment of the error.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: UPDATES ON STUDENT VACCINATIONS, PROM, PALOOZA, GRADUATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY

Head of School, Dr. Gina Pin, shared a report on upcoming, and one recent, important events at JBHS. **Student Vaccinations:** was organized by Barlow parent Amy Taylor; the Pfizer vaccine was administered; first dose took place on April 24 & 25, with second dose taking place on May 14 & 15; and, the school is not keeping track of students/families who are participating. **Prom:** will be held on May 21 at Michael's at the Grove in Bethel; dinner, dancing, photos and PTSA raffle will take place; seniors only; limit of 200 people, which includes guest, chaperons and event staff; only passenger cars, no limos; and, final approval will be by the Redding & Easton Departments of Public Health. **Palooza:** will take place on May 27; modified in-person program will be recorded and posted; presentation audience by invitation only; two sessions of 5:00-6:00 p.m. & 6:30-7:30 p.m.; science research fair will be 6:00-6:30 p.m.; and, details are being finalized. **Joel Barlow Legacy Society:** will be held on May 26; virtual and will be recorded; keynote speaker is Barlow graduate and current English teacher, Maeve Smith; cords & pins to be worn at commencement. **Awards Ceremony:** will be held June 3; virtual and will be recorded; written program detailing award recipients to be distributed; awards/recognition certificates given to students during advisory on June 9 and/or graduation rehearsal. **Graduation:** to be held June 16 at 6:00 p.m.; held at JBHS Stadium; two guests (428) per graduate (214) spaced from others on home side bleachers; stage, graduates and invited guests seated on turf; details regarding masking and physical distancing to be finalized; and, final plans to be approved by the Redding and Easton Departments of Public Health.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SUPERINTENDENT FOR NON-RENEWALS

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education determine that the contract of employment for the following teachers be terminated effective June 30, 2021 due to reduction in force: Megan Lane, Maria Shuma and Brianna Williams. The Superintendent of schools is directed to advise such persons in writing of this action. (D'Agostino, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: POLICIES FOR 1st READINGS: 4118.1 - SEX DISCRIMINATION HARASSMENT IN WORKPLACE TITLE IX; 5145.44 - SEX DISCRIMINATION HARASSMENT IN WORKPLACE TITLE IX

M. Williams explained that the District needs to be in compliance and that there was no choice in the language. She also said that she anticipates some changes again soon.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education move to 1st reading the following policies: 4118.1 - Sex Discrimination Harassment in the Workplace Title IX; and, 5145.44 - Sex Discrimination Harassment in the Workplace Title IX. (Williams, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dana Benson, Pond Road, Easton asked C. Zachery if the column headings in his Budget Object Summary reports could travel as the report is scrolled down.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

C. Graziano thanked the staff and parents for trying to restore some normalcy and balancing safety with normal.

M. D'Agostino wondered if there were any committee assignments needed at this time.

T. Johnston replied to M. D'Agostino that there were not.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education meeting be adjourned. (D'Agostino, Graziano). Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Submitted by Juliette Berry
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by
Sarah Ota