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REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons
On YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpOKinELAtzbYQcJ5NA3-hg>
February 23, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.
Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: D'Agostino, Johnston, Lehberger, Pampel, Thompson
Remote: Graziano, O'Brien (joined at 7:16 pm)
Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Scrofani
Others: 5 members of the staff and public, and the videographer

CALL TO ORDER

M. D'Agostino called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

M. D'Agostino started the meeting by saying: "There are no words to ease the loss of Redding student Brien Karlson. Our hearts are broken as we grieve alongside Brien's family, friends, classmates along with the entire school community. I ask that we pause for a moment of silence to remember an inquisitive, energetic boy taken too soon from his family and friends."

A moment of silence occurred.

M. D'Agostino continued with, "We'd like to encourage everyone to contribute to fundraising efforts in support of the Karlson family and to keep Brien's loving spirit alive in your heart." M. D'Agostino also thanked the first responders who responded to the scene and said that they should know that they are also in our thoughts and prayers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Move that the Region Board of Education approve the minutes of January 24, 2023, Regular Meeting. (Pampel, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: Move that the Region Board of Education approve the minutes of January 31, 2023, Joint Boards of Education Regular Meeting. (Pampel, Thompson). Approved. Unanimous.

STUDENT COMMENT

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: PRESENTATION OF 2023-2024 REGION 9 BUDGET
Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, first said that he was honored to present the 2023-2024 proposed budget to a warm and welcoming community that has a passion for developing intellectual individuals with a social, emotional sense. He also thanked each Board member, leader and especially the teachers and staff for their commitment to education. Dr. McKinnon said that as we continue with the budget process, he wants all of us to consider, "how do we improve," rather than "how much can we afford," and that families depend on us to educate students while preparing them for the journeys they have ahead.

Dr. McKinnon said that the proposed budget presentation would be divided into seven sections: Budget Process & Introduction; Strategic Priorities; Budget Drivers; Enrollment, Apportionment, Staff Changes & Grants; Cost Centers; Budget Summary; and, Next Steps. He also said that people watching the meeting from home could scan the QR code on their screens to submit budget questions for Central Office staff.

For the Budget Process & Introduction section, Dr. McKinnon said that several changes were made to the budget process, including: money monitoring; accountability; information easier to locate; the budget model changed from budget object to cost center model; real-time changes to budget can be made; budget linked to strategic priorities. He also said that several area school districts have proposed much higher budget increases.

For the Strategic Priorities section, Dr. McKinnon said that highly successful school districts and companies have one thing in common which is that they're always thinking about the future. He said that the Region 9 strategic priorities: focus on student achievement and the allocation of resources; have been separated into the six previously identified areas; and, the new website that focuses on the strategic priorities will be launched soon.

For the Budget Drivers section, Dr. McKinnon said that the drivers should not be a surprise. The main budget drivers are: medical insurance, staff, utilities, facilities and transportation.

For the Enrollment, Apportionment, Staff Changes & Grants section, Dr. McKinnon said: enrollment is an obvious and important aspect to budgeting and that JBHS will experience a slight decrease followed by a moderate increase recovery during the 2025-2030 school years; the District will always strive to obtain grants; a proposed English Language Learner teacher will be split between Easton, Redding and Region and will be budget-neutral for Region 9; and, an increase of FTE is needed for the Structured Literacy Teacher.

Joel Barlow High School Head of School and Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Mario Almeida, spoke about the proposed learning centers reorganization, saying: there would be a Writing Center, a Math Center and an Academic Center; an existing secretarial position would provide assistance for all three centers; there would be a stipend for a certified staff to oversee all three centers, a Coordinator of Academic Services;

there would be a para for the Academic Center, partially subsidized with a grant; and, the teacher in the Math Center would be increased to a 1FTE.

Director of Special Education Services, Tracy Hussey, spoke about the proposed 18-22 transition program at Quinnipiac University. She spoke about current costs for transitional programs for JBHS students, the many benefits and opportunities with the Quinnipiac program, and some start-up costs.

Dr. McKinnon explained a Central Office reorganization that would combine the salary and responsibilities of the current Business Manager and K-12 Facilities Manager. He said this would be a shared cost across the three Districts.

For the Cost Centers section, Dr. McKinnon gave a summary of each cost center: Athletics is at \$947,272, which represents 3.8% of the budget and is a 3.92% increase; JBHS is at \$10,432,206, which represents 41.8% of the budget and is a 1.98% increase; District Wide is at \$6,298,832, which represents 25% of the budget and is a 5.19% increase; SpEd is at \$5,203,032, which represents 20% of the budget and is a 9.59% decrease; Facilities is at \$787,810, which represents 3% of the budget and is a 22.7% increase; Technology is at \$529,887, which represents 2.12% of the budget and is a 5.5% increase; Curriculum & Instruction is at \$20,361, which represents 0.8% of the budget and is a 49.7% decrease; and, Central Office is at \$732,475, which represents 2.9% of the budget and is a 6.87% increase.

For the Budget Summary section, Dr. McKinnon summarized all cost centers with a pie chart graphic. He said the total proposed 2023-2024 Region 9 budget is \$24,951,877; this is an increase of \$196,358, or 0.79%.

For the Next Steps section, Dr. McKinnon said that the next steps will be a survey and input, plus the new website and media. He said that he is extremely proud of the work of this budget with the strategic priorities. Dr. McKinnon said that he hopes our strategic plans are funded and that we make smaller decisions this year so that larger decisions are averted down the road. He closed his presentation by thanking the staff for helping to create the budget.

M. D'Agostino explained that Board members and members of the community should submit questions on the google sheet that had been shared with Board members and is accessible to the community through the District website. Board members had clarifying questions about enrollment per town, location of strategic priorities, and the proposed transition program. Dr. McKinnon responded that enrollment for JBHS is 405 for Easton (53.43%) and 353 (46.57%) for Redding; the strategic website still needs some minor work done on it; and, that a memo about the transition program will be presented at the budget workshop on February 28. Dr. McKinnon was also asked about the possibility of bringing in a consultant to put together a staffing analysis for the proposed Academic Center. He responded that they would have information on this at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

M. Pampel thanked the administration and staff for all of this work on the proposed budget.

K. Thompson thanked everyone for all of their work, and especially T. Hussey for her creative thinking and hardwork.

T. Johnston thanked the administration and staff for being at the meeting and for all of their work.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Regular Board of Education meeting be adjourned (Pampel, Lehberger).

Hearing no objections, M. D'Agostino adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Submitted by Karen O'Brien
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by,
Sarah Ota