

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons

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March 19, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

INSTR # M2024000234  
DATE FILED 04/01/2024 03:19:32 PM  
DEBORAH SZEGEDI TOWN CLERK EASTON CT

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Johnston, Thompson, Parkin, Denny, Pampel, Stinson

Remote: Graziano, O'Brien

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Scrofani, D'Agostino

Student Representative: O. Fellows

Others: Six members of staff and public, recording secretary, and videographer

CALL TO ORDER

T. Johnston called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

T. Johnston tabled approval of the Minutes from the March 14, 2024 Region 9 Board of Education Budget Workshop until the next meeting.

STUDENT COMMENT:

Joel Barlow High School Student Government Representative, Owen Fellows, read from his prepared report *Noteworthy News*. Highlights included: Maansi Tibrewal finished third in the Poetry Out Loud State Finals; Finn Bermingham, Kate Kryg, Kieran Nevins, Em Ploss, Grace Raymon, and Sassy Wood will attend the CT Music Educators Association All-State Music Festival; Maria Matic and Kaitlyn O'Brien will be recognized as regional winners for the 2024 HRRA 17th Annual Recycling Billboard Contest; the Robotics team received the Imagery Award at the New England District competition; Class of 2026 held a Trivia Night on March 8; the Girl's Basketball team received the Harold Swaffield Sportsmanship Award; Scott Romano won the CIAC Class M State Wrestling Championship for the third year in a row; and, Jordan Carr placed second in pole vault at the CIAC Indoor Track & Field Open Championship.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT:

J. Stinson said that the JBHS production of "Carrie," was awesome, and thanked all students and staff who were a part of it.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, suggested the Board move to next agenda item, school trip presentations. C. Parkin asked that at a future meeting there be a discussion about what information should be included on Special Education administrative reports to ensure report includes most important and relevant data. J. Stinson reported on recent Curriculum Committee meeting, saying that they discussed: curriculum review cycle and its importance; that they will look at special studies next; and that

they had passed a motion regarding changing some “Advanced” courses to “Honors” courses for the 2024-25 school year. He asked if the full BOE wanted to review and approve their motion at this meeting.

**Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education add new Agenda Item, Discussion and Possible Action, VII. A., “Review & Approval of Curriculum Committee Recommendations,” shifting down the order of all other Agenda Items by one place. (Stinson, Denny). Approved, absent any objection. Unanimous.**

C. Graziano asked how much of line 672 on page 4 of Budget Object Summary was going to be unexpended and result in savings. Director of Finance, Operations & Technology, Sara Scrofani, replied that there will likely be a savings, but could not commit to an exact number at this time.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: REVIEW & APPROVAL OF CURRICULUM COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education replace English 2 Advanced with English 2 Honors; Spanish 4 Advanced with Spanish 4 Honors; and French 4 Advanced with French 4 Honors, effective for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. (Stinson, Pampel). Approved 8-0. Unanimous.**

Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol said this change will result in increased rigor in coursework and that work will occur over the summer and that no change in enrollment is anticipated by Department Chair.

T. Johnston asked that moving forward Committee Chairs provide agenda items in advance of Region 9 Board of Education meetings as Committee Reports will not necessarily be included on every agenda.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: MUSIC TRIP TO DISNEY - 3/6/25-3/10/25

JBHS Choral Director, Gwynne Wittmann, presented details of next year’s Music Department trip to Disney World, March 6-10, 2025: dates accommodate standardized testing dates, sports seasons; school vacations, limits impact on winter show, avoid CMEA music festivals, and students miss only two days of school. She said the trip will cost \$2,015 and includes: airfare; busing in CT and FL; four hotel nights; four-day parks pass; all meals; workshops; instrument fees; all taxes and gratuities; t-shirt; and, tour operator escort. G. Wittmann said students will have soundtrack sessions and workshops with professional musicians and will perform for park guests. JBHS student, Kenji Perretz, spoke about his experience on the trip this past year, saying it was a great trip and he experienced much personal growth as a result.

**Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education support the 2025 Music Department trip to Disney World. (Pampel, Stinson). Approved 8-0. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: FRENCH TRIP TO FRANCE - 2/13/25-2/22/25

JBHS French Teacher, Emily Kaufman, presented details of next year’s French Department trip to France, February 13-22, 2025. She said the trip will cost \$3,090-3,160, depending on the number of students participating and includes: airfare; accommodations; tours; transportation; home stay; tour guide; and meals, except for four lunches that the students take on their own. E. Kaufman said there is a travel scholarship available, and that this is a reopening of the Exchange Program because the students hosting JBHS students during this trip will visit JBHS in April.

**Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education support the 2025 World Language Department trip to France. (Pampel, Stinson). Approved 8-0. Unanimous.**

T. Johnson asked that students come to a Region 9 Board of Education meeting next year to tell the Board about the trips.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: SET DATE FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 2024-2025 OPERATING BUDGET**

T. Johnston read the following notice into the Public Record: "Warning is hereby given to the electors and citizens qualified to vote at District Meetings of Regional School District 9. Being that a public District Hearing will be held at Joel Barlow High School Library Learning Commons on April 1, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. to present and receive comments on a budget proposal of the Board of Education of Regional School District 9 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending on June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$25,407,041."

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: NEST BUILDING AND FIELDS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE**

G. Denny reported that there will be a community forum at the stadium for members of the public for building project presentation, receive a tour, hopefully by student-athletes; and break into small groups for feedback. She said the date and time will be confirmed and shared on as many platforms as possible. Discussion followed that included: expected target date for the RFP; process for needs assessment; project timeline; more specific project costs are needed; consideration of how to complete process within remaining bonded amount of \$1.5M. T. Johnston replied that RFP process will begin in April and April Region 9 Board of Education meeting will include updated timeline; current estimated cost for building and waste water treatment is \$1.8M.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: INCREASING EDUCATOR DIVERSITY PLAN IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC ACT 23-167**

Dr. McKinnon briefly outlined CT Public Act 23-167, noting he had shared timeline with Region 9 Board of Education members for plan implementation. Dr. Pierson Ugol said main plan components are goals, oversight, strategies, resources, and risks/mitigation. The question was asked if any additional resources - beyond the newly approved budget will be needed for this plan; Dr. Pierson Ugol replied no.

**Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan in accordance with Public Act 23-167 and grant authorization to the Superintendent to make necessary revisions and resubmit to the State Department of Education if needed. (Stinson, Denny). Approved 8-0. Unanimous.**

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ER9 BUS TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT EXTENSION**  
Facilities and Operations Manager, Mike D'Agostino, explained that a motion to approve a 5-year extension of the contract with First Student had come out of the recent Committee meeting, and that Easton and Redding School Districts had already passed the contract extension. He said the only thing changing in the new contract is the overall price.

**Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the 5-year transportation contract extension from First Student as presented, and authorize the Board Chair to sign subsequent to legal review. (Stinson, O'Brien). Approved. 7-1. (Parkin voted no).**

Board members expressed interest in Region 9 completing an independent route analysis to ensure efficiency and optimal cost savings. M. D'Agostino said that First Student has been helpful and will work with ER9. He said that the District has an opt-out form for families not needing bus transportation and that ridership has been increasing.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVAL OF INVOICE JBHS UPPER GYM PROJECT**

M. D'Agostino said that this invoice is for protective netting for the windows when batting practice is taking place. He said there will be one more invoice for the project in the amount of approximately \$8,000, and that the project is on budget.

**Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve progress payment (Application #7) from Millenium Builders in the amount of \$49,759 for the Upper Gym Safety Improvement Project at Joel Barlow High School. The invoice to be paid using funds from the Region 9 Capital Reserve. (Stinson, O'Brien). Approved. 8-0. Unanimous.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

NONE.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

C. Graziano asked that a review of the overall 2023-24 Capital Plan be placed on the agenda for the next Region 9 Finance & Operations Committee meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

J. Stinson made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by G. Denny. Hearing no objections, T. Johnston adjourned the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Submitted by Kathy Thompson  
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by Sarah Ota