

Filed subject to approval.

JOINT MEETING OF
EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION AND REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2017

Attendance:

Easton Board of Education: Bindelglass, Bobroske, Chieda (7:40 pm), Hicks, Parker, Shortt

Redding Board of Education: Florkowski, Denny, Gaspar, Hoffman, Irwin, Miller

Administration: McMorran, Pierson Ugol, Edwards, Fox Santora, Kaplan, Martin, Wallin, Wessman Huber, Basta

Others: 10 members of the public/staff and a reporter from *The Redding Pilot*.

Redding Chairperson Melinda Irwin called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Easton Chairperson Jeffrey Parker called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 18, 2017, the regular meeting held on May 9, 2017 and the joint meeting of the Easton, Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education held on May 16, 2017 as submitted. Hicks, Shortt. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 2, 2017 and the joint meeting of the Easton, Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education held on May 16, 2017 as submitted. Hoffman, Gaspar. Approved. Mrs. Denny abstained from approving the minutes of the May 2, 2017 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Parkin, Indian Hill Road: Thanked Carrie Wessman Huber for her years of service at Redding Elementary School. Suggested that the Board consider a rotating schedule for administrators to attend Board meetings.

Colleen Pilato, Portland Avenue: Also thanked and congratulated Carrie Wessman Huber on her new assignment. Stated that she appreciates the school environment that Dr. Wessman Huber created and hopes that the Board is successful in attracting a candidate that can meeting Dr. Wessman Huber's standards.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Parker mentioned that Easton would be hosting a coffee/cake session with area realtors the next day to tell them what is unique about Easton schools and the town.

Mrs. Florkowski thanked Dr. Wessman Huber for her love of "our kids and our community." She stated that the Board expects to attract strong candidates to fill the position.

Mr. Miller echoed Mrs. Florkowski's comments and those of the members of the public with regard to Dr. Wessman Huber. He suggested moving agenda items pertaining to the Executive Sessions (items 7, 8 and 9) to occur after the final Board Member Comment.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education move agenda items 7, 8 and 9 to occur after the final Board Member Comment. Miller, Hoffman. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education move agenda items 7, 8 and 9 to occur after the final Board Member Comment. Bobroske, Bindelglass. Approved. Unanimous.

Easton Board member, Jenny Chieda arrived at 7:40 pm.

INTRODUCTION OF EASTON/REDDING INTERIM DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES AND SUPERVISOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

Dr. McMorran thanked Dr. Wessman Huber for her 17 years of service with the Redding Board of Education and said that she treated each Redding child as if he/she were her own child. Now with a shorter commute in her new position, she will get to spend more time with her own children. He also thanked Tracy Edwards for her years of service with Easton and Redding. He then introduced Mary Lou Torre as the new interim Director of Special Services and Vanessa Visners as the new Supervisor of Special Services. A press release will go out about their appointments.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION: CHANGE IN AUTHORIZED SIGNER OF THE ED-099 AGREEMENT FOR THE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education change the authorized signer of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Program to Mr. Scott Reiss, Director of Finance & Operations, as of July 1, 2017. Miller, Hoffman. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education change the authorized signer of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Program to Mr. Scott Reiss, Director of Finance & Operations, as of July 1, 2017. Bindelglass, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION: REDDING DECISION ON 2015-2016 BUDGET BALANCE

Dr. McMorran explained that work on the upgrade of the security cameras at Redding Elementary School originally scheduled to take place in June of 2016 was delayed with the permit process and because the vendor needed a full week to complete the installation when school was not in session due to drilling through concrete walls, etc. The work was completed during the April 2017 spring break. All invoices have been paid, leaving a balance of unspent funds of \$37,189.04. Mrs. Irwin and Mrs. Denny expressed concerns about the length of time it took to get the work done. Mr. Hoffman felt the money should be returned to the Town of Redding.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education return unspent funds of \$37,189.04 from the 2015-2016 school year to the Town of Redding. Hoffman, Florkowski. Approved. Unanimous.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move that Item XC, Redding Administrator Contracts be moved to occur after the Executive Session. Miller, Hoffman. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION: BUS DEPOT – PROGRESS UPDATE

Mr. Parker provided information on moving the bus depot to the Town of Easton near Samuel Staples Elementary School. There will be a one-time, non-recurring cost of \$397,000 for site preparation, paving with blacktop, and building cost, including providing electricity and water. Cost offsets will be the elimination of rent to Bethel of \$135,000 and real estate taxes and utilities. Recurring annual costs to run the depot are anticipated to be approximately \$43,000. The selectman of Easton and selectwoman of Redding will be meeting in June to discuss moving forward with this project and negotiating what Redding's cost will be. The depot should be ready for operation in June of 2018. The lease with Bethel ends on June 30, 2018. Easton will be paying the \$397,000 initial cost, but Region 9 and Redding will be paying rent to Easton. Mrs. Denny expressed concern that there should have been involvement from the tri-Board Transportation Committee when the bus depot plans were discussed, and that it seems that, as with Central Office, the Redding taxpayers will again be beholden to Easton. Mr. Parker explained that this has been an initiative of both the towns of Easton and Redding. Redding had reported that there was no land available that could house a bus depot. Mr. Parker also explained that the decision is made by the town(s), not the Boards of Education.

DISCUSSION: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Dr. McMorran gave a presentation on Appreciative Inquiry. He asked the Board members and members of the public to consider what they value most about their school system. He asked - what is happening in our schools that you would like to see more of/do more of/encourage more of? Quoted from Appreciative Inquiry Handbook (2008, Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros) – “Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives ‘life’ to a living system when it is most effective, alive and constructively capable in economic, ecological and human terms.” Dr. McMorran would like to unlock the potential of the fine people that work for ER9.

DISCUSSION: MIDDLE SCHOOL MASTERY

Dr. Pierson Ugol reported on the middle school grading study that began last year. The committee is chaired by Diane Martin (principal, JRMS) and Annie Mohr (HKMS teacher). From their preliminary findings, the committee concluded that teaching and learning are more about the approach to mastery and understanding rather than grading and performance. Mrs. Martin reported on professional development in this area. Next steps will focus on specific instructional strategies to help teachers better recognize how their students are moving toward mastery of a specific subject. Additionally, Dr. Pierson Ugol mentioned that another important piece to student mastery will be communicating more effectively with parents. Dr. Pierson Ugol added that vertical content leadership teams will continue to work together going through relevant standards for each discipline.

DISCUSSION: STUDENT INTERVENTION TEAM STUDY UPDATE

Dr. Pierson Ugol spoke about SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Intervention), a state mandated program implemented in 2009 to respond to the varying needs of individual learners through a tiered, data-informed process. She reported that in 2015-2016 representatives from each school in the tri-district, led by Toni D'Agostino (RES early intervention teacher) and Tim Sather (HKMS counselor), met monthly over the course of the year to refine and align the district processes for identifying and using data in a purposeful manner. The study included outlining best practices through SRIBI research, completion of needs assessments, discussions and plans for revisions of existing processes, and prioritization of next steps. The scope and progress of the SRBI implementation in 2016-2017 included the execution of a common software tool for standards-based math and English language arts assessment. The tool helps teachers with the creation, analysis and monitoring of progress for students

who receive small group and individual intervention. Cross-district common assessments and assessment cut scores for math and English language arts intervention were also implemented, and the ER9 Student Intervention Team (formerly SRBI) began to unify a set of common principles and structures. Next steps include expanding the use of short assessments to inform differentiation and progress monitoring, link the assessment program with SIT student intervention plans, arrange vertical content meetings to discuss student performance and related instruction, review the effectiveness of each assessment to inform instruction, reduce comprehensive and summative assessments when not necessary, examine data-team cycles that inform SIT in all districts, and provide additional data team professional development to content specialists and instructional leaders.

DISCUSSION: CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS 2016-2017

Dr. McMorran stated that the Redding Board of Education will hold a final meeting for the school year on June 26, 2017 with a focus on how the 2016-2017 budget year ended. He suggested that the Easton Board of Education consider doing the same since they must meet anyway to review the results from the NESDEC facilities use study. As of June 1st, the Redding balance is \$899,000. Much of the budget savings is related to late resignations/hiring for 2016-2017. Easton's current budget balance, as of June 1st, is \$640,000. Dr. McMorran suggested that the Boards think about transferring some of the funds at year-end to the Health Insurance Reserve Fund. There are two more payrolls to be run in June.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Special Services: Tracy Edwards, Director of Special Services, reported that a significant miscalculation was discovered in the 2017-2018 Redding budget today. However, a recent change in enrollment will produce savings that will negate this issue. No further detail could be given due to student privacy concerns. Mrs. Edwards also reminded the Boards that additional families have moved into the districts. In Redding, six new students will require one-on-one para-educational support. This will have a significant impact on the 2017-2018 budget.

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Kimberly Fox Santora reported that Catalina Depardieu, a SSES student won the national Invention Convention. She also reported current kindergarten registration for 2017-2018 is at 84 with two additional inquiries not confirmed. Current kindergarten classes are three classes with 19 students each and one class with 20 students.

Superintendent: In response to a request for information asked by a Board member at the recent tri-Board meeting, Dr. McMorran shared a detailed report on how much in Chartwells sales profits have been used within the Easton, Redding, and ER9 school districts since becoming the lunch services vendor in 2013. The breakout of funds is as follows: \$161,000 to Joel Barlow High School, \$11,000 to Helen Keller Middle School, \$27,000 to Samuel Staples Elementary School, \$57,000 to John Read Middle School, and \$49,000 to Redding Elementary School. Each year, Chartwells makes a recommendation to Central Office on where they believe the money is best spent.

John Read Middle School: Diane Martin asked Board members to view the Immigration Projects displayed in the Learning Commons.

Redding Elementary School: Dr. Wessman Huber informed the Board that she is the finalist for a principal position at Farmington School District. She said Redding has been her professional home for the past 17 years and that her, "educator roots are here, deep in Redding." She said she is honored to have been a teacher and leader for the Redding community and thanked the staff, administrators, and

Board members for their support throughout the years. Mostly, she thanked the children of Redding who, she says, taught her, “the importance of humility and happiness.”

BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORTS

Redding Curriculum Committee: Dr. Irwin reported that the Redding Curriculum Committee met earlier in the evening to review the Enrichment and Gifted & Talented Programs in Redding. It is felt that a fresh look is needed at both programs. A hybrid model of the two programs may be used in 2017-2018 but that there will continue to be flexible group models. Dr. Gaspar added that there will be the same commitment to students with the goal of maintaining the same service level. The topic will be discussed further at the next Redding Board of Education meeting on June 26th.

Easton Long-Range Planning Committee: Mr. Parker reported that further meetings of this committee have been suspended since current enrollment numbers are better than the Prowda projections. He also stated that the Board had commissioned the NESDEC (New England School Development Council) to conduct a review the two Easton schools and submit their recommendation as to whether building consolidation would make sense. Their report will be given at the end of June meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Parkin, Indian Hill Rd, Redding: Stated that he feels it is a mistake to tie long-range planning to enrollment rather than to what the community wants and needs. Additionally, he stated that the community feels more strongly about the Gifted & Talented Program than the Enrichment Program. He also has procedural and substantive concerns about the bus depot project and feels it is entirely driven by Easton and should have been a collaborative, joint project and is also worried that DATTCO is too involved with the project. He feels they are a terrible provider. He asked if natural gas is driving the site selection.

Colleen Pilato, Portland Avenue, Redding: Commented on Dr. McMorran’s presentation on Appreciative Inquiry – good work, good timing.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Bobroske thanked Dr. McMorran for his presentation and for focusing on the things that matter. Feels there is a need to shift our focus to the positive. She said she is concerned about the “churn and burn” of administrators and worried that the Boards’ demands may be unreasonable and unfair. In addition to organizational change, she feels a refresher course for Board members on their roles and responsibilities would be helpful.

Mrs. Chieda commented on the Easton Memorial Day Parade and the participation of approximately 80 students in the marching band. She complimented the music teachers in Easton.

Mrs. Shortt added that the SSES performance by the fifth graders was also great.

Mr. Parker extended special thanks to Tracy Edwards for all the work she has done. He said her leadership has been outstanding. He also commented on the bus depot, that Easton did take the lead because it was their understanding that Redding did not have the space and, while there was no “rush to judgement,” they were aware of the time constraint and needed to implement a plan ensure the site would be ready in time.

Dr. Bindelglass: Also expressed his concern about the “churn and burn” of administrators and feels the tri-district structure is a big contributor. Feels that sometimes Board member requests are too parochial and wastes administrators’ time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Motion: The Easton Board of Education move to Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent’s evaluation. Shortt, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting recessed at 10:00 pm.

RECONVENE

The Easton Board chair reconvened the meeting to public session at 10:28 pm.

ADJOURNMENT: EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Motion: move to adjourn the Easton Board of Education meeting. Bindelglass, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

The Easton Board of Education meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION

Motion: The Redding Board of Education move to Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent’s evaluation and building administrator contracts. Miller, Hoffman. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting recessed at 10:00 pm.

RECONVENE

The Redding Board chair reconvened the meeting to public session at 10:25 pm.

Motion: The Redding Board of Education has approved the 2017-2018 administration employment contracts as per the terms agreed upon by the Redding Board of Education subcommittee and administrators. Hoffman, Florkowski. Approved. Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT: REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION

Motion: move to adjourn the Redding Board of Education meeting. Miller, Hoffman. Approved. Unanimous.

The Redding Board of Education meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Submitted by Allyson Florkowski, Redding Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Vicki Cram