

Filed subject to approval

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

February 4, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

Held Remotely Pursuant to Executive Order No. 7B

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97616671003?pwd=R3hRREU0U1NHZmNsaFU5UFdNeC81dz09>

Meeting ID: 976 1667 1003

Passcode: 360371

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Johnston, Graziano, Berry, D'Agostino, Denny, O'Brien, Pampel, Williams

Administration: Harrison, Pierson Ugol, Zachery

Others: 3 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

T. Johnston called the Region 9 Board of Education Special Meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

M. D'Agostino requested that the job description of Director of Digital Technology be read and explained by the Superintendent of Schools. He also expressed that it was difficult for Board members to process information if they are receiving it on the day of a meeting, and requested that Board members receive information more in advance of meetings.

T. Johnston explained the reason for the Special Meeting was that the other two Boards -- Easton and Redding -- had already approved the position of Director of Digital Learning and that they need to discuss and decide upon it before the next Joint Boards of Education meeting on February 8.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL LEARNING

Dr. Harrison said that the Director of Digital Learning & Technology will play a pivotal role in advancing ER9's vision of student learning and led the BOE through a presentation about the proposed position that included: an explanation of student-centered learning, a general job description for the position, the specific responsibilities for the position, the qualifications for a candidate for the position, a pay rate chart for this position at DRG A and DRG B schools, and a list of Connecticut colleges and universities that offer degrees in this field.

BOE members then asked numerous questions of Dr. Harrison, Dr. Pierson Ugol, Dr. Pin and C. Zachery concerning: duplicity of job responsibilities at JBHS, salary of the position, the use of data in slide presentation, the measure of need of the position, the future of permanence of learning from home, the District websites, methods of communication with community, the history of prior proposed Central Office positions, the reality of finding a candidate, and any timeline for seeing quantitative effects of this position on student learning.

A thorough conversation took place with Dr. Harrison, Dr. Pierson Ugol, Dr. Pin and C. Zachery replying to BOE members. Dr. Pin said that this new position would allow JBHS staff members to do what they need the staff members to do and what they excel at. Dr. Harrison said that this new position is the most needed in the District right now. He said that the SpEd responsibilities are covered really well and are not a necessity at this time. Dr. Pierson Ugol said that the new position will make the work at the school level that much more efficient and wherever curriculum writing occurs, technology integration can occur. C. Zachery said that we can educate the Board of Finance about this new position and the need for it, and that the new position will definitely also be a help to him.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the new Central Office position of Director of Digital Learning. This person will report to the Superintendent of Schools pursuant to CT 10-157. However, the Boards will retain full authority relating to compensation and benefits for all Central Office employees under individual contracts with the Boards. (D'Agostino, O'Brien) 3-5. Failed.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the new Central Office position of Director of Digital Learning. This person will report to the Superintendent of Schools pursuant to CT 10-157. However, the Boards will retain full authority relating to compensation and benefits for this position. (D'Agostino, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2020-2021 CENTRAL OFFICE BUDGET

M. D'Agostino said that he hopes an Executive Session will be added to the Joint Boards of Education Meeting on February 8, 2021 for the purpose of discussing two positions that have compensation that do not align.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Lang, Blackrock Turnpike, Redding, said that the meeting had been a thoughtful discussion and that it was too bad more people were not there. He said he fully supports the position and that you might hear people wanting to justify the new position with offsets. J. Lang said that he has a lot of respect for everyone and cautioned not to reduce the salary of the new position saying, often cheap employees end up costing you more.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

K. O'Brien said that everyone knows and is well aware as to how hard the Central Office staff works, but she is just concerned that the number will be a lightning rod.

T. Johnston thanked the Board, administration and the public for showing up and having a thoughtful discussion. He also said congratulations to Dr. Harrison on his snow day video and for putting us all and our towns in a good light.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Submitted by
Juliette Berry - Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by
Sarah Ota