

REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION
JOINT MEETING WITH EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
JUNE 7, 2011

This was a joint meeting with the Easton Board of Education. The minutes only reflect events pertaining to the Redding Board of Education.

Present

Redding Board of Education: Barickman, Gaspar, Joyce-Kirk, Lewson, Miller

Easton Board of Education: Bobroske, Dunsby, Peskay, Underberger

Administration: Cicchetti, McPadden, Sullivan

Redding school administrators: Pierson Ugol, Wessman Huber, Martin, Wallin, Farrell, Freeston

Easton school administrators: Kaplan, Fox Santora, Mammen, Dekle

Others: 19 members of the communities & staff

Dr. Gaspar and Dr. Underberger called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm in the Joel Barlow High School Media Center

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the minutes of the May 10, 2011 meeting as submitted. Lewson, Joyce-Kirk. Approved, 4-0-1. Mr. Barickman abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Frank DeSalvo, Redding: Mr. DeSalvo asked if any additional information was available regarding the boiler system problems at John Read Middle School and how that type of decision/problem could be avoided in the future. Dr. Gaspar reported that it is believed the boiler system installed during the 5th grade addition project was changed from the original design plan to reduce costs. Procedures are now in place that will hopefully avoid such problems. Mr. Miller added that the current committee overseeing the facility improvements includes members of the community with expertise in the areas of construction, architecture and HVAC (Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning).

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Miller commented that the Tri-Board meeting held last night and discussion of the “ways of working” was one of the most productive meetings he has participated in.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2010-2011

Dr. Cicchetti introduced the presentation. The new professional growth format, using a collaborative model, was introduced to the staff, teams and departments, in the late fall. Action plans and timelines were developed. The presentations will show the work accomplished during the past year, including the use of student assessment data.

John Read Middle School Principal, Diane Martin, introduced 5th grade teachers Susan Stewart and Lena Green for a presentation on how the student assessment data was used in planning for the IE periods to give students the additional help they needed in specific areas. The overall focus for the school was writing and the 5th grade team concentrated on reading and writing across all subject areas.

Redding Elementary School Principal, Stephanie Pierson Ugol, introduced 4th grade teachers Brian Donnelly, Lisa Welp, and Chris Wermuth who described their work to improve student vocabulary, and as a result, better reading comprehension.

Helen Keller Middle School Principal, Susan Kaplan, introduced Nicole Klein and Cindy Brodeur who described their work to improve student's mastery of math in the 6th grade, including developing a math assessment.

Samuel Staples Elementary School Principal, Kim Fox Santora, introduced John Brakeman, Joe Clark, Courtney Maggi and Helen Simmons who described the work on improving student mastery of reading, including how they raised the goal for students after their mid-year reflection.

Each presentation was followed by discussion and questions. Board members asked the teachers when and how they planned the work. The staff responded that much of the planning was accomplished through use of professional development time, common team planning time, and evening hours using email communication.

Board members brainstormed on ways to facilitate curriculum alignment and time/ways for the teachers of the Easton and Redding to work together.

GRADE 8 PORTFOLIO PILOT

The Grade 8 Portfolio Pilot program was completed with the scoring of the writing portfolios in late May. Jonathan Budd and Jack Powers (Joel Barlow High School), along with Sara Broas (HKMS) and Kerry McKay (JRMS), were instrumental in the success of the pilot program. The portfolio writing samples were reviewed by the secondary English teachers to guide instructional decisions for the incoming ninth graders.

FINALSITE PRESENTATION

The Central Office webmaster, Mrs. Vicki Cram, introduced the subject of the improvements for the overall website and improvements to the individual school websites. The Region 9 Communications Committee began the discussion of the websites. In addition, comments from students and parents suggested the school websites could be more professional, unified and more informational. Mrs. Cram added that the current websites are supported by Fuss & O'Neil, who plan to discontinue support of the ListServ software.

Anthony Tata of Finalsité presented information on the services the firm provides. Finalsité specializes in website development support for schools and educational organizations for desktop and mobile platforms. In addition to the website development, they provide ListServ notification and other emergency communication services.

Mrs. Cram added that the current school websites are managed by teachers who receive an annual Webmaster stipend. None are trained in web design but have been trained to use the software used for the websites. They are solely responsible for updating their individual school websites. Mrs. Cram is responsible for the Central Office website. The cost of converting to Finalsité is \$17,500/year, divided by the five schools and Central Office. The first year would include training of the existing school webmasters. In the following years, the amount of individual school webmaster time and cost could decrease substantially.

Board members expressed their concerns about not having sufficient information on the topic to make an informed decision. The general sense was that the Easton and Redding Boards should have been involved in the process from the beginning as this was a matter that would affect all three boards. Mr. Miller stated that the issue should have been brought to the Redding Communication Committee for review and he was not prepared to vote on the subject. Dr. Underberger indicated the information is new to the Easton board members. He suggested that board representatives meet with Mrs. Cram and representatives of the Region 9 Communication Committee and administrators to review the process used to evaluate available website providers.

No action was taken.

2011-2012 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Dr. Cicchetti asked the Board to review and approve changes to the 2011-2012 School Calendar regarding how snow/emergency days would be applied. The changes define how snow/emergency days will impact the last day of school and potential impact on April/February vacations. The information is intended to help families and staff plan vacations. Additional proposed changes brought the calendar in line with the 2010-11 calendar, which included an October professional development day and a definite January professional development day. In the past, the January day “floated” with the Joel Barlow exam schedule.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the 2011-2012 Easton, Redding and Region 9 School Calendar as revised. Lewson, Miller. Approved. Unanimous.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Cicchetti reported that the work being done with the bystander intervention project continues and an update will be provided in the fall. A communication was sent out earlier that afternoon via ListServ regarding how the schools will respond to the high temperatures predicted for the next few days; copies were provided to the Board members and the public.

Other administrative reports were deferred.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Barickman reminded all that a Town Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 9, to approve the funding for the boiler replacement project at JRMS and the water treatment systems at JRMS and RES.

Dr. Gaspar reported the Resource Committee reviewed the schedule planning for the new Kindergarten program, financial costs, and readiness for fall. He noted that there is minimal financial impact for the change in program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Betsy Higgins, Redding: Mrs. Higgins commented on the current enrollment number for Kindergarten for the fall and asked if the board/administration was considering reducing the class sections. She hoped that class size would be low, especially given the changes in the program. She added that she is aware some families are not enrolling their children because of the change, but keeping them in private schools.

Mike D’Agostino, Glen Hill Road, Redding: Mr. D’Agostino thanked the administration for the advance notification of steps to be taken in the schools to cope with the expected high temperatures. He added that the presentations were good and informative, but too many and too long for one evening. Regarding a writing center for John Read Middle School, he would support this. He believes students make good use of the Barlow Writing Center. He was disappointed that the two boards were not prepared with information on the website provider presentation in advance of the meeting. Dr. Cicchetti responded to the comments regarding the website presentation and expressed that he takes responsibility for the administration not communicating more thoroughly in advance of the meeting.

Tamara Bertsch, Redding Road, Redding: Mrs. Bertsch had comments and questions regarding the staffing of the Kindergarten. Mrs. Pierson Ugol responded that some existing staff members will be assigned specific duties and some positions were posted and are still being filled.

Jeanine Herman, Putnam Park Road: Mrs. Herman stated she attended the Kindergarten information program and was pleased with the work being done to be ready for school in the fall. She was concerned about the financial impact of the added positions. Dr. Gaspar responded that additional staffing costs are minimal.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Underberger, Dr. Gaspar and other board members thanked Dr. Cicchetti for his contributions to the schools of Easton and Redding and wished him well in his retirement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move to recess to executive session for a discussion of Teachers' Contract negotiations. Barickman, Miller. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting recessed at 10:55 pm.

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 11:25 pm

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the addition of 0.2 FTE for physical education, art and music teachers at RES to support full day kindergarten. Lewson, Joyce-Kirk. Approved. Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education meeting be adjourned. Miller, Lewson. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 pm

Recorded by Mary Maday