

REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES
March 1, 2011

Present: Barickman, Brey, Gaspar, Goldberg, Joyce-Kirk, Lewson, Miller
Administration: Cicchetti, McPadden, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Wessman Huber, Martin, Wallin, Farrell, Freeston
Others: more than 50 members of the community & staff, and representatives of the Redding Pilot and Patch.com

Dr. Gaspar called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm in the John Read Middle School Community Room.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the minutes of the January 4, 2011 meeting as submitted. Lewson, Joyce-Kirk. Approved, Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the minutes of the January 6, 2011 meeting as submitted. Lewson, Joyce-Kirk. Approved. 6-0-1. Mr. Brey abstained.

BOARD MEMBER APPRECIATION

Dr. Cicchetti noted that March is Board of Education appreciation month. Board members were treated to chocolate bars. Students from Redding Elementary School and John Read Middle School read letters of appreciation to the board members.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Board members thanked the students for their thoughtful letters, thanked the taxpayers for providing the funds to educate the children of Redding, and thanked the parents for the wonderful students.

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION COMMUNICATION AWARDS

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) annually recognizes schools for the efforts in communicating with students, parents and their community. John Read Middle School was recognized for their Web site. Teacher Mike Kelly and Principal Diane Martin accepted the award. Redding Elementary School was recognized for their Student Parent Handbook, for the 4th grade musical production of *One* with Kevin Briody, and for their RESPECT project featuring the raccoon mascot. Principal Stephanie Pierson Ugol accepted the awards.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS CONCERNING THE INSTITUTION OF TEACHER NONRENEWAL PURSUANT TO CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES SECTION 10-151.

Dr. Cicchetti stated that the recommendation for teacher nonrenewals is for positions that were filled for one-year terms, those for long-term substitutes or 1-year positions. Each person was aware of the conditions when hired and have been informed of this action. The nonrenewals are not related to performance and the district is grateful to these individuals for work.

Motion: move that the contract of employment of Lindsey Kent, Barbara Mancher, Alison Marsh, and Katharine Pico not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the

2010-2011 school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such persons in writing of this action. Brey, Goldberg. Approved. Unanimous.

REPORT OF KINDERGARTEN STUDY COMMITTEE

The Kindergarten Study Committee was introduced for a presentation of their recommendations regarding the Kindergarten program . The Committee includes Board of Education members Kathleen Joyce-Kirk and Ed Miller, administrators Michael Cicchetti, Stephanie Pierson Ugol, Carrie Wessman Huber, Marie McPadden, Cheryl Freeston, teachers Katie Schnyder (1st grade), Tanya Gilbert (1st grade), and Cindy Rohr (Kindergarten) and parents Irene Caldwell and Tamar Dessner. The Committee members presented information, data collected and analyzed, and recommendations of the Committee. The recommendation was for a program consisting of four full-days and one half-day The recommendation will provide additional time for music, science, social studies, small group instruction, developmental play in the classroom and developmental play in alternate locations.

Following the presentation, board members asked questions and discussed the recommendation. Questions and comments included the reasoning for change to a 4 and 1 program rather than a 3 and 1 or other hybrid, the costs that will be incurred for the program change compared to the savings from transportation costs and more information on the developmental play structure/plan.

Dr. Cicchetti commented that the intent of the recommendation is not to push down the first grade curriculum into kindergarten that research has shown the relationship of music to language development and social interaction, and the Monday half day proposal will allow time for the teachers to work together, professional development and time to work with their teaching para-professional staff.

The Committee scheduled two sessions for presentation of the recommendation to parents, on Tuesday, March 8 in the morning, and on Thursday, March 10 in the evening.

Motion: move to add a Public Comment to the agenda. Miller, Joyce-Kirk. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Betsy Higgins, Great Pasture Road: questioned how the recommended proposal will improve the quality of the kindergarten program. She favors the existing Kindergarten program.

Tamara Bertschi, Redding Road: commented that the proposal includes additional “inside” time, when children of that age would benefit with more “outside” time.

Kim Thompson: comments related to the need for parent input in the decision making and suggested the Board consider a referendum on the issue.

Mike D’Agostino, Glen Hill Road: suggested the community should have been involved earlier in the process; suggested the need for comparative data; asked if consideration was given to child care potential on the Monday half day; and asked if the program was the best for the children.

Dina Houser, Pheasant Ridge Road: commented that she is happy with the current program and enjoys the time at home with her child.

Kim Depra, Sidecut Road: commented that her son was in a full day program at a Montessori school in Wilson and suggested the Committee review their program.

Liz Guideia, Putman Park Road: commented that the negative impacts were not identified in the presentation, and stressed the importance of parents interacting with their children at home.

Melissa Moreau, Deer Hill Road: commented that the current program is great, and questioned the concept of structured play time.

Mr. Brey left the meeting (10:15 pm)

Rachel Ambrosio, Mountain Road: commented that Kindergarten age children often do not have the endurance for a structured full day of activity and may lose interest or lose out on the opportunity to participate in other activities.

Jeannine Herman, Putnam Park Road: commented that she agreed with most of the speakers, and believes the current program is fine.

Sandy O'Reilly, Old Redding Road: commented that the current program allows the parent the opportunity to spend time with their child.

CAPITAL REQUEST

Mr. Barickman reported the list of capital requests is being finalized and more information will be available in the next couple of weeks.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

John Read Middle School: Principal Martin reported on a discussion session with bus drivers that centered on bus behavior and bullying. Mrs. Sullivan noted that the bus drivers were very appreciative of the discussion and opportunity to discuss the issues.

Redding Elementary School: Principal Pierson Ugol reported the school Winter Carnival has been rescheduled for Saturday, March 5. The winter concert was very successful, especially considering the limited rehearsal time due to inclement weather and school closings. The 4th grade Character Council is producing video vignettes dealing with how to handle social situations on the bus.

Special Services: Mr. Farrell reported the schools' Social Psychologist, Katelin Fitzpatrick, presented a paper at the National Association of School Psychologist's National Convention.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Ms. McPadden reported the Wellness Committee met in February, after many cancelled meetings due to the snow, and Meg Whitbeck of Chartwells Food Service introduced information related to the mini-nutrition lessons that will be made available to teachers in Grades K-12. The Chartwells Grant of \$2,000 will be awarded to the John Read Middle School this year for use in the food service area.

Director of Finance and Operation: Mrs. Sullivan reported that Health Insurance Claims are tracking as anticipated. She added that the new bus company, Dattco, received applications from 52 of the current 54 bus drivers. Dattco will meet with the drivers and is interested in employing as many who qualify.

Superintendent: Dr. Cicchetti thanked all staff who helped with the planning for the cancellation of the February break. Student attendance for the week ranged from 70% to 75%. The concern about overall impact on instructional learning will be reviewed by Ms. McPadden. Dr. Cicchetti attended the Redding Elementary concert and was impressed with the performance and selection of music. He also met with new teachers and Noella Buschbaum who is the TEAM coordinator.

Mr. Barickman asked for a report on the financial impact of cancelling the February vacation. Dr. Cicchetti responded that the impact was minimal since most of the staff not in attendance were required to cover the cost of their substitute.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Mr. Barickman reported the advertising/marketing of the position is underway. The consultant, Eliza Holcomb, has reported that the interest level is good. A public forum is planned for March 14, 2011 at the Joel Barlow High School. This will be an opportunity to share the process with the community and solicit input from the members of the community.

RESOURCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Barickman reported the Committee met prior to the meeting to discuss scheduling issues and complications. The Redding Public Hearing on the budget is scheduled for Thursday, March 3, 2011 at John Read Middle School.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

The Curriculum & Instruction Committee met and discussed the math curriculum, the role of the math specialist, and transition from the elementary school to the middle school, and from the middle school to the high school.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike D'Agostino, Glen Hill Road: commented on the need for continuity of education, especially in light of the number of snow days and cancelled February vacation. He suggested the ER9 Structure and Ways of Working Committee accelerate their work as it is difficult to look for and hire a superintendent while the school district structure is being discussed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Barickman thanked Dr. Cicchetti for the tough decisions he has made over the past few months and the handling of the numerous related personnel issues. Dr. Cicchetti thanked the administration and union leadership for their cooperation. Dr. Gaspar thanked the teaching staff for their cooperation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education recess to executive session for a discussion regarding Redding Administrators' Salary Agreement. Goldberg, Lewson. Approved. Unanimous.

Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Pierson Ugol, Mr. Farrell and Dr. Cicchetti were invited to be present. The meeting recessed at 10:49 pm

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 11:15 pm

Motion: move that the Redding School Administrators (Elementary Principal, Elementary Vice-Principal, Middle School Principal, Middle School Vice- Principal, Director of Special Services and Supervisor of Special Education) be compensated for School year 2011-20012 in the amounts and according to the terms set forth in the recommendation made by the Board's Negotiations Committee, and as described in Executive Session. Goldberg, Barickman. Approved. Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis Brey, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday