

REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES
April 5, 2011

Present: Barickman, Gaspar, Goldberg, Joyce-Kirk, Lewson
Administration: Cicchetti, McPadden, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Wessman Huber, Martin, Wallin, Farrell, Freeston
Others: more than 30 members of the community & staff, and representatives of the Redding Pilot & Patch.com

Dr. Gaspar called the meeting to order at 7:35 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 March 1, 2011 meeting as submitted. Goldberg, Joyce-Kirk. Approved, Unanimous.

FOURTH GRADE SPECIAL PROJECT – ONE

The 2010 Fourth Grade Special Project, *One*, was recognized with a CAFE (Connecticut Boards of Education) Award. A video presentation was provided to demonstrate the work that went into the project and the final product. Resident Kevin Briody provides the leadership for the project each year. Work on the 2011 production, with a topic of “change” is currently underway.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tamara Bertschi, Redding Road: Mrs. Bertschi presented the Board with a petition signed by 95 Redding residents in support of the current Kindergarten program and opposed to the proposed change to a four-full-day program.

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PARENT SURVEY

Mr. Farrell presented the results of the 2009-2010 Connecticut Special Education Parent Survey which the Redding school district participated in. The presentation includes a Summary Report, which included a comprehensive review of findings from the statewide survey, and a District Report, which offers supplementary district-level information for Redding.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT PROGRAM (PBIS) UPDATE

Kristen Miller (Redding Elementary School Social Worker) and Carol Flockhart (John Read Middle School Social Worker) presented an update on the implementation of the PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) Program at both schools. The program is designed to teach appropriate behavior to all children through early intervention, use of multi-tier model of service delivery, use of research based, scientifically validated interventions, monitoring of student progress to tailor interventions and use of data to make decisions.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Mrs. Joyce-Kirk recapped the process used by the Kindergarten Study Committee to arrive at their recommendation to change the current Kindergarten program to a four full-day and one short-day program. The change will provide additional time for music, science and social studies instruction, small group instruction, and developmental play in alternate locations.

Discussion of the recommendation followed. Mrs. Pierson Ugol added that the program and staffing are not fully defined at this time. The savings from the elimination of the two early bus runs will result in a savings of \$40,000, and that savings is expected to cover the cost of the added personnel and necessary materials and play equipment.

Dr. Gaspar acknowledged the receipt of the petition from residents who wish to retain the current program as it is. He also read a statement from Lewis Brey in support of the Committee’s recommendation for the new program.

Dr. Cicchetti commented that the change is responding to the potential state mandates on the kindergarten program. He added that the proposal will be budget neutral, but the Committee did not take cost into account during their deliberations to find the best program for the children. The additional materials and supplies that will be needed are being evaluated and discussed now. The Kindergarten classroom walls that need to be changed would be a capital expenditure, not an operating budget item.

AGENDA ADDITION

Motion: move to add a Public Comment at this time. Goldberg, Barickman. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeanne Herman, Putnam Park Road: Mrs. Herman is not in favor of the proposed change. She asked if the threat of state mandates warrant a change in the program at this time.

Betsy Higgins, Great Pasture Road: commented that once the program is changed, and does not work, it cannot go back. She asked how a vote could be taken without full information on the cost and impact on the budget. She suggested the community be asked about the proposal.

(name unclear), Starrs Ridge Road: commented that she is opposed to the change, and asked that a decision be deferred until the program was clearly defined.

Tamara Bertschi, Redding Road: commented that the community was only made aware of the proposed change recently and did not have the opportunity to react and take action on the proposal.

Beat Bertschi, Redding Road: asked if the impact of the change was more playtime for the children, commented on the importance of the child/parent interaction, noted a lack of transparency with regard to the budget and lack of cost benefit analysis.

Dana Gray, Lamppost Road: Mrs. Gray spoke in support of the recommended change to the Kindergarten program.

Board discussion continued.

Mr. Goldberg expressed his concerns regarding, specifically the need for more specifics on the programming and the budget numbers for the recommendation. Mr. Barickman suggested that if the current program is not broken, there is not a need for a fix. But if there is an increase in what must be done academically, he could understand an expansion of the current program. He suggested the concept be approved, with final approval after the program is more clearly defined and the costs are definite.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education authorize the administration to move forward with a final plan for expanding the current Kindergarten program to a four-full-day model, and along with that, develop full detailed plans for the expanded out-of-classroom activity, and a detailed budget to support the implementation of that plan, and ask the Director of Finance to identify a contingency of \$30,000 from next year's operating budget to be reallocated to support the plan, if upon reviewing the final plan the board decides there needs to be additional funding to assure it's success, and to include a plan/metrics to measure the success of the program. Barickman, Goldberg. NOT approved. 2-3. Voting for: Barickman, Goldberg. Voting against: Joyce-Kirk, Lewson, Gaspar. Motion failed.

Following additional discussion, another motion was offered.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the Kindergarten program as proposed by the Kindergarten Study Committee. Approved. 4-0-1. Mr. Barickman abstained.

Motion passed.

2010-2011 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Dr. Cicchetti noted that the current calendar has scheduled the last day of school as a full day. Traditionally, the last day of school is a half day for students and a full day for staff. This year it is extremely important for the staff to have additional time to pack classroom materials to prepare for the capital projects that will be undertaken in the summer months. Dr. Cicchetti recommended the last day of school be a half day for students and a full day for staff.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the recommendation of the administration and make the last day of school in June a half day for students and a full day for staff. Barickman, Lewson. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Redding Elementary School: Principal Pierson Ugol reported on the successful PTA sponsored events, the Winter Carnival and the Big Science. She also announced that 4th grade student, John McCleary is the County Winner for the Connecticut Fire Prevention Poster Contest.

John Read Middle School: Principal Martin reported on a performance by the Freestyle Repertory Theatre, a program sponsored by the JRMS PTA. She also presented each board member with a copy of the book, "This We Believe", a book being discussed by the PTA Book Group. The books were donated by the PTA.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Mrs. McPadden reported the Tri-State Consortium Science Curriculum Evaluation will conduct a two-year follow-up visit in November of 2011. The purpose of the visit is to review progress made to date, following their 2009-2010 visitation that resulted in specific recommendations to improve the science curriculum. The ER9 Curriculum Steering Committee will meet on March 31. Dr. Michael Hibbard will present information related to developing essential questions, assured experiences, and the Understanding by Design curriculum model.

Director of Finance and Operation: Mrs. Sullivan reported two accounts are over budget, the snow removal account and the unemployment insurance. These overages will be covered through transfers from other accounts that are under the budgeted amount.

Superintendent: Dr. Cicchetti congratulated Mrs. Wessman Huber on completing her doctoral studies. He reported the State's Strategic School Profile reports will be available for next month's meeting. Dr. Cicchetti also thanked the PTA for their sponsorship of the many activities in both schools. He had the opportunity to attend the Big Science at the elementary school and the JRMS Reflections Award Ceremony. An administrative team, building principals and assistant principals, Mrs. McPadden and Mrs. Freeston, will attend another session at the Harvard Graduate School of Education on Change Leadership .

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. Barickman reported the capital improvement projects are moving forward and thanked the Director of Finance and Operations, Peggy Sullivan, and the parent volunteers on the committee for their work. The final bids for the boiler replacement at JRMS are due soon. Bids for the HVAC work at RES & JRMS are also coming in for evaluation. The JRMS water system recommendations have been received and the committee is getting the costs for the recommendations. The RES septic system recommendations have been received and the system is in better shape than anticipated. The cost for the recommendation is in the \$150,000 range.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Mr. Barickman reported the field of candidates has been narrowed to two finalists. Interviews will be scheduled for the two finalists to interview with each of the three boards of education.

STRUCTURE AND WAYS OF WORKING COMMITTEE

Dr. Gaspar reported the committee has employed consultant Dr. Evan Pitkoff to conduct interviews of the administrators and previous superintendents. The committee has been divided into two groups to continue work on specific tasks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike D'Agostino, Glen Hill Road: asked if the Positive Behavior Intervention Support Program would correct inappropriate behavior, and if there are consequences for inappropriate behavior. He also expressed his concern about the actual cost for the implementation of the new Kindergarten program.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:23 pm

Recorded by Mary Maday