

REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES
November 9, 2010

Present: Barickman, Brey, Gaspar, Joyce-Kirk, Lewson, Miller
Administration: Cicchetti, Mas, Sullivan, Wessman Huber, Wallin, Freeston,
Others: eight members of the community and a representative of the Redding Pilot.

Dr. Gaspar called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm in the John Read Middle School Library.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education amend the October 5, 2010 minutes as submitted. Miller, Lewson. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike D'Agostino, Glen Hill Road: encouraged all to attend the Joel Barlow High School Fall Musical, *The King & I*

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Brey commented on the importance of the Strategic Plan and the impact of Dr. Cicchetti's announcement of his retirement in June. He suggested that the board discuss the role of the ER9 partnership, and how the partnership was serving Redding and what the potential negative impacts are on students and learning.

Dr. Gaspar thanked Dr. Cicchetti for his contribution to education in Redding and for his continued work with the district over the next months. Dr. Gaspar read a statement regarding change, especially unexpected change, and the opportunities that change presents. He noted that the demands of the school system on the administrators of the tri-district system are many.

Mr. Miller commented that this is a time for re-examination of roles and finding solutions to relieve the pressures on the administrators.

Mrs. Joyce-Kirk added that the Search Committee found it challenging to find candidates during the recent search. There is a narrow field of candidates available. The board needs to make sure that the job is a reasonable one.

UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TEAMS

Dr. Gaspar reported that further work on the Strategic Plan has been postponed, and will be revisited at a yet to be determined date. Work will continue on alignment of curriculum and instruction across the districts, as well as progress on simplifying structures and providing adequate resources, and work on communication will continue. The broader discussion of the priorities and particularities will be taken up at a later point. The formal use of implementation action teams of staff, parents, community members, etc. will be on hold. The individual school improvement plans will continue.

UPDATE ON REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION RETREAT

Dr. Gaspar reported the board members met to discuss how to function as a board more effectively. One change will be in committee structure. The formal change to the new structure will be established at the December board meeting. The board will have three committees: Resources,

including financial, physical and other resources; Curriculum and Instructional Leadership focusing on the core educational aspects of the district; and Communication, facilitating communication within and outside the district. These committees would be comprised of board members and administrators, with the meetings generally held prior to regular board meetings. The expectation is that this would enable the board to deal with more issues in advance of the budget season and delve deeper into issues than could be done at regular board meetings. Some ad hoc committees, such as the Facilities and Kindergarten committees, would continue to exist until they have completed their work.

PREPARATION OF 2011-2012 OPERATING BUDGET

Mrs. Sullivan presented an overview of budget drivers for the budget. In the contractual salary area, this is year 3 of a 3-year contract. The general wage increase for all teachers will be 2.61%. The total salary increase including step increases is expected to be 3.95%. The Health insurance premium share contribution will increase from 17% to 18%. The support staff (paraprofessional) contract is up for negotiations for the 2011-12 year. Custodians will receive a 3% salary increase and an increase of 1% in premium share contribution.

Enrollment numbers show a decrease in student population by 52 students for Redding Elementary School and an increase of 2 students for John Read Middle School.

Regarding state funding, the amount for Excess Cost Revenue is not known at this time, but this year's funding from Education Cost Sharing (\$98,115), Education Jobs Fund (\$28,315) and ARRA Funds (\$134,579) will not be available for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

The anticipated increase needed to maintain a status quo budget is about 4%. In addition, Mr. Farrell reported that addition of three new students who are outplaced with a significant cost.

Mr. Brey asked if there was consideration of good faith discussions with the teachers and potential give backs. Regarding the increase in health insurance, Mr. Brey asked if HSA (Health Savings Account) plans were being considered. He added that the Weston School district offered huge incentives to convert to an HSA plan and it was very successful with a substantial cost savings.

AGENDA ADDITION

Motion: move to add an executive session to the agenda for a discussion of performance of a public employee, Michael Cicchetti. Barickman, Joyce-Kirk. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

RES: Assistant Principal Wessman Huber submitted the written report that included information on upcoming activities, Professional Development offerings, late arrivals/early dismissals, and current enrollment spread. She also commented that the annual Halloween Parade was a huge success.

JRMS: Assistant Principal Wallin provided the written report that included information on upcoming events, student and staff activities and Professional Development opportunities. The annual Book Fair and parent conferences are currently taking place.

Special Services: Special Education Supervisor Freeston reported work is continuing on the accreditation process with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). A self study of the various criteria and standards has been done. Going forward, next year the

portfolio would be prepared along with staff and parent surveys and a visitation by the accreditation team.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Mas reported that she, Mrs. Wessman Huber and Sally Francia presented a two-hour institute at the Connecticut Reading Association Conference. The presentation, titled *Defining the "I" in SRBI: Reciprocal Teaching Across the Content Areas*, focused on how teachers can implement the scientific research-based reading model to improve comprehensive. The institute was attended about 60 people. Mrs. Mas reported the new Grade 6 science textbooks arrived early. Training was provided by a science consultant with the Glencoe Company for all Grade 6 science teachers in Redding & Easton.

Director of Finance and Operation Sullivan reported that Health Insurance Claims for September were lower than budgeted. Year-to-date expenditures are tracking as expected with one exception, unemployment compensation. The enrollment report by Dr. Peter Prowda was provided for review.

Superintendent Cicchetti acknowledged the work of Mrs. Mas, Mrs. Wessman Huber and Mrs. Francia with the reading workshop. He reported the administrators, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Pierson Ugol and Mr. Farrell, were not present because they were attending a three-day Change Leadership Group training program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education this week. The training will focus on systemic change for student success. Mrs. Wallin, Mrs. Wessman Huber and Mrs. Freeston will attend the training at another time. Dr. Cicchetti reported the administrative retreat on October 20 centered on three topics: first and second order change, mapping initiatives, and the professional growth plan form. Dr. Cicchetti had the opportunity to observe the delivery of math instruction at Redding Elementary School. The redesign of the use of the time of the enrichment staff has been beneficial to students and teachers. The school improvement plans will be presented at the December meeting.

CAPITAL BUILDING PROJECTS UPDATE

Mr. Miller reported the Committee is continuing their work. He thanked the community members of the Committee for their ongoing commitment to the project. The largest element, the HVAC (heating & air conditioning) system, has been studied and proposals for the work will be presented to the board later in the year.

PTA LIAISON

Mr. Miller reported the overriding theme centers on some of the changes at Redding Elementary School and the need for better communication of those changes.

KINDERGARTEN STUDY GROUP

Mrs. Joyce-Kirk reported the focus of the group is to define the components of an exemplary kindergarten program, and then determine if the current kindergarten program provides the time, schedule and/or structure to include those components. She reported that staff members are visiting Kindergarten programs in area & DRG A schools. The Committee is composed of herself, Mr. Miller, Kindergarten and Grader 1 teachers and parents.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Brey reported the transportation contract with First Student expires at the end of the current fiscal year. The Transportation Committee has prepared a RFP (Request for Proposal) that will go out next week.

MAGNET SCHOOL

Mr. Lewson reported the Magnet School Trustees have not set the tuition rate for next year, but that information should be available for the December meeting. Danbury is experiencing an increasing enrollment rate and there is some discussion of expanding the Magnet School to include Grades 6-8.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move to executive session for a discussion of performance of a public employee, Michael Cicchetti. Barickman, Joyce-Kirk. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting recessed at 8:29 pm

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis Brey, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday