

Easton, Redding & Region 9 Boards of Education
Tri-Board Special Meeting
June 6, 2011
Minutes

Attendance:

Easton Board of Education: Allan, Dunsby, Peskay, Underberger(by phone). Absent: Bobroske, Maiorano
Redding Board of Education: Barickman, Gaspar, Joyce-Kirk, Lewson, Miller. Absent: Goldberg, Brey
Region 9 Board of Education: Abrams, Gombos, Lewis, Logie, Shapiro. Absent: Karvelis, Hocker, Macchio
Administration: Cicchetti, Sullivan, McPadden
Others: 14 members of the community and staff, and representatives of the Redding Pilot/Easton Courier and thedailyeaston.com

Chairman of the Region 9 Board of Education, Mark Lewis, opened the meeting of the Tri-board meeting in the Media Center of the Helen Keller Middle School

Mr. Lewis called the Region 9 Board of Education meeting to order at 7:50 pm

Dr. Gaspar called the Redding Board of Education meeting to order at 7:50 pm

Dr. Dunsby called the Easton Board of Education to order at 7:50 pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Easton, Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education accept the minutes of the May 10, 2011 meeting as submitted. Shapiro, Peskay.

Redding Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Easton Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Region 9 Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ken McAdam, Redding: Mr. McAdam expressed his concerns about the AP U.S. History course curriculum at Joel Barlow High School. Based on his child's experience, he felt that the course was more of a prep course for the exam than a college level course.

Saul Cornell, Redding: Dr. Cornell agreed with the comments of Mr. McAdam. While he had attended a Region 9 Curriculum Committee meeting which listened to his opinions on AP U.S. History, Dr. Cornell remains disappointed that the Region 9 board supports the JBHS administration's decision to continue offering what he believes is a flawed AP course as an option for Joel Barlow juniors.

Mr. Lewis assured Mr. McAdam and Mr. Cornell that their concerns were noted and that the Region 9 Board of Education will work with the administration regarding any future changes to the program of study offered to Joel Barlow students (in coordination with the program of study provided to Easton and Redding middle school students so that they can take full advantage of what Joel Barlow High School has to offer.) Mr. Lewis invited all members of the public interested in providing input to attend regular Region 9 board meetings, committee meetings, or to provide their opinions and recommendations directly to the board chair, the superintendent, or the Joel Barlow Head of School.

DISCUSSION, PUBLIC COMMENT AND ACTION ON 2011-2012 COMPENSATION FOR ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION, E. MARIE MCPADDEN, AND FOR DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS, MARGARET SULLIVAN

Mrs. Gombos reported the Compensation Committee's recommendation for the 2011-2012 compensation for the two positions be a 2.5% increase in salary with no other changes in the other benefits. The 2.5% increase was based on the average of the teacher contract of the three districts for fiscal 2011-2012. (The ER9 Compensation Committee was comprised of four members, two from the Region 9 Board and one each from the Easton and Redding Boards) Discussion followed.

Dr. Dunsby stated that he could support the increase for the Director of Finance and Operations based on comparisons with other districts. He would support a somewhat lower increase for the Assistant Superintendent positions, also based on comparisons with other districts.

Dr. Shapiro urged the boards to consider the economy and impact on the communities, and look beyond the DRG (ER9 is a member of DRG A, the top Demographic Reference Group in Connecticut), including the private sector.

Dr. Underberger commented that going forward the boards should consider relating administrator salary increases to specific performance criteria.

Motion: move that the Easton, Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education accept the recommendation of the Compensation Committee for a 2.5% salary increase for the Director of Finance and Operations position for fiscal 2011-2012. Logie, Allan.

Dr. Gaspar commented that he would support the 2.5% increase, the increase is comparable with the average teacher's contractual increase for fiscal 2011-2012, and the salary is below what is paid for comparable positions in the DRG. He added that performance criteria will need to be determined.

Mr. Miller commented that the DRG is only one measure for comparison, and that in this competitive market, the district would suffer if good administrators are lost to higher paying districts.

Dr. Peskay commented about the concerns of the Easton Board of Finance and public perception for giving raises in the current economy. She added that a comparison with the private sector is not appropriate since the schools are publically, not privately, funded. She would support the 2.5% increase for the Director of Finance based on the work performed.

Public comment was allowed.

Saul Cornell, Redding: Mr. Cornell supported the best compensation that can be afforded. However, he spoke out against linking teacher or administrator compensation to narrow metrics, especially test scores - since he believes this would exacerbate the problem of teaching narrowly to prepare students for standardized tests.

Vote on Motion:

Redding Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Easton Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Region 9 Board of Education: Approved. 4-1. Abrams, Gombos, Lewis, Logie voting yes; Shapiro voting no.

Motion: move that the Easton, Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education accept the recommendation of the Compensation Committee for a 2.5% salary increase for the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction position for fiscal 2011-2012. Logie, Allan.

Public comment was allowed.

Ken McAdam, Redding: Mr. McAdam noted that the Superintendent made the recommendation to the Compensation Committee for the increase, but he urged the board to look at the broader area for comparison. Mrs. Gombos responded that the Committee accepted the recommendations based on the standards used by the Superintendent and his evaluation of the work of the Central Office administrators.

Jennifer Broadbin, Easton: Mrs. Broadbin expressed her concerns about the lack of curriculum information available to the Easton public. Dr. Cicchetti responded that there has been a good deal of work done on the curriculum in recent months and the lack of availability of written curriculum is not an indication that good curriculum does not exist nor of the curriculum work that will be undertaken beginning this month and into the coming school year.

Vote on the Motion:

Region 9 Board of Education. Approved. 4-1. Abrams, Gombos, Lewis, Logie voting yes; Shapiro voting no.

Easton Board of Education: Tied, 2-2. Voting for: Allan & Underberger; voting against: Dunsby & Peskay

Redding Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Mr. Lewis called for a second vote since the motion was not approved by all three boards.

Redding Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Easton Board of Education: Tied, 2-2. Voting for: Allan & Underberger; voting against: Dunsby & Peskay

Region 9 Board of Education. Approved. 4-1. Abrams, Gombos, Lewis, Logie voting yes; Shapiro voting no.

Mr. Lewis called for a third and final vote since the motion was not approved by all three boards.

Region 9 Board of Education. Approved. 4-1. Abrams, Gombos, Lewis, Logie voting yes; Shapiro voting no.

Easton Board of Education: Tied, 2-2. Voting for: Allan & Underberger; voting against: Dunsby & Peskay

Redding Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Mr. Lewis announced that after the legally required third vote, the motion was approved with a majority 2-1 vote of the three separate boards.

DISCUSSION, PUBLIC COMMENT AND ACTION ON APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT FROM JULY 1, 2011 THROUGH JULY 14, 2011 (EASTON AND REDDING BOARDS OF EDUCATION)

Mr. Lewis stated that there is a statutory requirement to have a certified interim superintendent for the period between Dr. Cicchetti's retirement date and the date the new superintendent will begin work. While Region 9 Board of Education had voted to appoint E. Marie McPadden to that position at their last meeting, it was necessary for both the Easton and Redding boards to vote on the proposed interim appointment.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education appoint E. Marie McPadden to the position of Interim Superintendent from July 1, 2011 through July 14, 2011. Dunsby, Peskay. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education appoint E. Marie McPadden to the position of Interim Superintendent from July 1, 2011 through July 14, 2011. Lewson, Joyce-Kirk. Approved. Unanimous.

Since all three boards had voted in favor of the appointment, Mr. Lewis noted that E. Marie McPadden was now officially appointed as the ER9 interim superintendent to serve from July 1 through July 14, 2011. Dr. Cicchetti will submit the required notification to the State Department of Education.

DISCUSSION, PUBLIC COMMENT AND ACTION ON COMPENSATION FOR INTERIM SUPERINTENDED FOR SCHOOLS FOR JULY 1, 2011 THROUGH JULY 14, 2011.

Mrs. Gombos reported the Compensation Committee researched the customary methods used to calculate compensation in this type of situation. The Compensation Committee recommended a formula based on a percentage of salary differential (between the current superintendent's salary and the assistant superintendent's salary, which is then divided in half prior to calculating a per diem wage.) Based on this formula, the

committee the recommended interim compensation of \$1,500 for the period of July 1, 2011 through July 14, 2011.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the recommendation of the Compensation Committee for a salary compensation for the interim superintendent position for July 1, 2011 through July 14, 2011 of \$1,500. Logie, Shapiro. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the recommendation of the Compensation Committee for a salary compensation for the interim superintendent position for July 1, 2011 through July 14, 2011 of \$1,500. Peskay, Allan. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the recommendation of the Compensation Committee for a salary compensation for the interim superintendent position for July 1, 2011 through July 14, 2011 of \$1,500. Lewson, Joyce-Kirk. Approved. Unanimous.

Mr. Lewis notes that the motion passes 3-0. Mr. Lewis also noted for the public that during the two week period when ER9 would be paying the \$1,500 interim superintendent salary increase, ER9 would not be paying two weeks of salary to a permanent superintendent - hence there will be a net savings to ER9 during this period.

DISCUSSION, PUBLIC COMMENT AND ACTION ON THE REPORT FROM THE STRUCTURE AND WAYS OF WORKING COMMITTEE

Dr. Gaspar began the discussion with an introduction of Dr. Evan Pitkoff, his task, assessment and recommendations.

Dr. Pitkoff reviewed his reports: Part 1, Assessment and Perceptions, and Part 2, Recommendations.

Following the presentation, comments from the public were taken.

Sharon Stemme, Easton: Mrs. Stemme represented the Easton Board of Selectmen on the Committee. She was thankful for the opportunity to participate on the Committee and added that everything in the report needs to be explored. She urged the establishment of a committee to follow up on the report.

Mike D'Agostino, Redding: Mr. D'Agostino could not support one regional K-12 school district for the two towns. He suggested the boards find a constructive way to work together.

Donna Zappulla, Easton: Mrs. Zappulla commented that it is important for the schools to work together for the children.

Julia Pemberton, Redding: Mrs. Pemberton represented the Redding Board of Selectmen on the Committee. She noted that there is a lot to learn from the report and more discussion is needed.

Bob Lessler, Easton: Mr. Lessler is a member of the Easton Board of Selectmen. He suggested that a formal tri-board could help to coordinate the boards of education.

Bernadette Waterman, Easton: Mrs. Waterman commented that the study is a good one and shows a way to look forward and make improvements for the schools and communities.

Suzanne Krivit, Redding: commented on a disconnect in Redding between the high school and the other schools. She would favor a separate one-town K-12 school district for Redding.

Dr. Gaspar offered a motion for consideration.

Motion: move that the boards of education 1) reconstitute a committee under Dr. Josefsberg's guidance, 2) examine elements involving resources by 10/31/11 to inform the budget process in a timely fashion, and 3) to conduct a full review by 1/31/2012 with items either accepted for implementation with a time line, deferred with a time line, or rejected.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Miller asked Dr. Pitkoff if there were areas/issues that were most prevalent and should be addressed sooner than later, and what issue did he think would be the most difficult to achieve. Dr. Pitkoff responded that the "work load" issue of the Central Office staff is an issue that needs to be addressed. Addressing that issue will allow the administrators for more time to deal with issues of curriculum and allow them to perform their jobs more effectively. Specifically, the human resources area needs additional staffing given the number of contracts and number of different health care plans in existence. Dr. Pitkoff added that converting to one district would be the most problematic.

Dr. Peskay recommended a time line for accomplishing tasks, with specific decisions.

Dr. Shapiro commented that Dr. Pitkoff's report does not recognize the Region 9 Board of Education's dual role as a board of education and board of finance. She found the administrator perception expressed in the report that Region 9 requires more work of the Central Office was unfair, and that as a board of finance, additional reports and information are critical to the regional board's decision making process. She questioned the accuracy of the statement that the region has more committees and more meetings than the other boards (providing year-to-date data available on the ER9 web site). She stated it was incorrect, given its dual role, to portray the Region 9 Board of Education as generating unnecessary work for the central office staff. She pointed out that the report (based solely on interviews with 14 current or former ER9 administrators) does not recognize that Region 9 board members have a legal fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of the two towns.

Mrs. Gombos agreed with Dr. Shapiro's comments, adding that she prefers to work with facts & data, not emotions, adding that there is a need to move from perceptions to facts. She would prefer the process of moving forward wait until the new superintendent (Dr. Bernard Josefsberg) begins his tenure in mid-July as head of the shared K-12 ER9 central office.

Dr. Gaspar (who served as chair of the Structure, Ways of Working Committee) commented that while the motion includes specific deadlines, those dates could be altered at the request of Dr. Josefsberg.

Mr. Barickman commented that alignment was a critical element moving forward. He added that the ways of working together, and easing the pressure and amount of work of the Central Office staff were important.

Mr. Logie (one of the two Region 9 board members who served on the Structure, Ways of Working Committee) commented that the ER9 structure with two K-8 boards, a regional 9-12 district, and shared K-12 central office has been in existence for 50 years, and is comprised of five very good schools. He has found that while there may be minor differences in funding or curriculum between the Easton and Redding K-8 schools, there is not a difference in the readiness of students as they move from the 8th grade to the regional high school. Mr. Logie also took exception to the consultant's public comment that ER9 could be a leading district in Connecticut if it moved from its current structure toward a regional K-12 board structure. Mr. Logie wanted the public to know that the current system was providing excellent educational services to Easton and Redding students and that graduates of Joel Barlow High School were already very competitive when applying to the most selective colleges and universities in the country. For example, Mr. Logie noted that seniors in the Joel Barlow Class of 2011 have been accepted to elite schools to include: Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Amherst, Wellesley, University of Chicago, Northwestern, Johns Hopkins, Vassar, Washington University of St. Louis, Bowdoin, UC Berkeley, Georgetown, Tufts, Smith, Colgate, NYU, and many other very selective undergraduate programs (to include the increasingly selective University of Connecticut honors program - where one Barlow senior has accepted a full, merit scholarship offered to the top two seniors in each Connecticut high school.) Mr. Logie concluded by saying that while changes in ways of working were necessary to improve efficiency and the quality of life for

the three senior central office administrators, it was not necessary to change the structure of ER9 to further enhance the quality of educational services and opportunities provided to Easton and Redding students.

Vote on Motion:

Redding Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Easton Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Region 9 Board of Education: Approved. Unanimous.

Mr. Lewis noted that the motion carried 3-0 and that he and the other two board chairs would discuss next steps with Dr. Josefsberg after he begins his tenure as ER9 superintendent.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Dunsby, Allan. Approved. Unanimous

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Logie, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Logie, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday