

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION  
November 29, 2011  
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Abrams, Gombos, Hocker, Karvelis, Lewis, Logie

Administration: Josefsberg, McMorran, McPadden, Sullivan, Sheehy, Pin, Santangeli, Panos, Roszko, Kipp, Cram

Student Representative: Erin Meskers

Others: seven members of the community and staff, a representative of the Redding Pilot/Easton Courier, and the videographer

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm in JBHS Media Center

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2011 special meeting as submitted. Karvelis, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### STUDENT COMMENT

Student Council representative, Erin Meskers, reported the production of The Wiz was a huge success and fun for the participating students. Students are getting into the holiday spirit and are participating in a Toy Drive for a school in Bridgeport and a coat drive. She also noted that the ELF (Easton Learning Foundation) annual holiday party is coming up, adding that ELF provides funding for grants to the Easton schools and Joel Barlow High School.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Dale Lancaster, Redding: Mrs. Lancaster commented on the presentation (Annual Performance Report) made at the last meeting and specifically the Lexile Reading score information. She urged the board members to support all reading initiatives.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Thomas Logie distributed a 6-page note to fellow board members and the administration regarding the trend in JBHS college application outcomes. The focus of the note was the impact early decision and early action applications (submitted by students by October of their senior year) have had over the past two years on the total number of college applications and acceptances) linked to the top 10-15 students in their class. Mr. Logie noted that seven of the top fifteen seniors in the Class of 2011 were accepted by their top choice college via an early application. As a result, these students then withdrew all other pending applications - reducing the total number of acceptances to the most selective schools this past spring. Simply put, the success of these students in gaining acceptance to Columbia, Yale, the University of Chicago, the Washington University, St. Louis, Vassar, and Bowdoin led to only one application for each, hence fewer total applications to the most selective schools, and a low percentage of successful applications to the Barron's list of most competitive colleges and universities.

Mr. Logie's note consolidated the JBHS college application outcomes over the past seven years for a more selective list of 38 colleges and universities deemed by many as the most selective and prestigious.

Mr. Logie also detailed how difficult it is to gain acceptance to schools such as Yale, showing a step-by-step screen to show that only one in three valedictorians applying to Yale from Connecticut public high schools is accepted by Yale (if not a recruited athlete, musician, or child of a major donor).

In closing, Mr. Logie recommended that the board consider approval in future budgets of travel expense funds to support a proactive promotion effort directed at 15-20 elite colleges and universities within driving distance of JBHS. Mr. Logie suggested that these visits and presentations to admission officers be led by the Head of School and the ER9 Superintendent. Presentation slides and an updated school profile could then be placed on the soon to be updated R9 web site along with answers to frequently asked questions. Mr. Logie believes that such an

effort would significantly enhance the reputation of JBHS and its students with a wide spectrum of colleges, with families considering the purchase of a home in Easton or Redding, and with parents of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that they should matriculate to Barlow instead of a private high school.

#### WEBSITE VENDOR APPROVAL

At a previous meeting, the Region 9 Board of Education approved Finalsite as the website vendor, pending approval by the Easton and Redding boards. The Easton and Redding boards requested a further review and study of available vendors. Ms. Cram researched other vendors and arranged for demonstrations by two vendors for consideration. Ms. Cram gave the Region 9 Communications Committee a presentation on the review of the three website vendors and the conclusions reached by the Website Committee (webmasters, board members, staff, and PTA parent representatives). The final recommendation was a consensual agreement to engage Edline for website services. Both the Easton and Redding boards of education have approved Edline as the website vendor. Implementation of the new website will take two months, with the District website being the first one changed, and the communication tools will be also be available for use by parents and students. Mr. Karvelis thanked Ms. Cram for her extensive work on this project.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Edline as the website vendor. Karvelis, Hocker. Approved.Unanimous.**

#### DISPOSITION OF PROCEEDS FROM DEBT REFINANCING

Mr. Hocker reported the Financial Advisory Committee discussed the \$116,000 savings in the current fiscal year as a result of debt refinancing. The Committee recommended deferring discussion and action on the disposition of savings until further information is available and all options have been reviewed and discussed.

Mrs. Sullivan reported the current Capital Reserve Fund Balance is \$173,000. The savings from the refinancing in Year 2 is \$3,568.

#### TRIP TO NICARAGUA

The request for consideration of a trip to Nicaragua was withdrawn.

#### PROGRESS UPDATE ON CURRICULUM PROJECTS

Dr. McMorran requested a meeting with the Curriculum Committee (Lewis, Gombos & Hocker) to present three new course proposals prior to presentation to the full board of education. These include an American Studies course that includes American Literature and U.S. History, another Freshman Humanities term course that includes English 1 and Western Civilization, and a third course in technology that is a follow-up to the Principals of Technology now being offered. In addition, three textbooks are being considered for the following courses: Statistics, Honors Biology and Algebra.

If schedules permit, the Curriculum Committee hopes to meet and review the administration proposals prior to the December 19<sup>th</sup> Region 9 board meeting.

#### UPDATE ON BLACK AND GOLD DAY “ACADEMY” EXPERIENCES

Mrs. Sheehy provided an update on the Black and Gold Day assembly periods and the “Academy” experiences. The recent assembly for Freshmen covered school climate, the Sophomores included a panel discussion on the topic of boundaries, and the Juniors and Seniors reviewed the college application process and experience. The “academy” sessions allow blocks of periods on specific topics, i.e. the science of guitar, bystander, mock trial, etc.

#### CABE MEMBERSHIP TRAINING

CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) offers information, training sessions and other activities for board members. Mrs. Abrams recommended the new board member training to the new Region 9 board members.

#### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL, SECOND READING

These policies were presented for a first reading at the previous meeting.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 2111 Equal Employment Opportunity for a second and final reading. Gombos, Karvelis. Approved.Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 4118.1 Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment for a second and final reading. Gombos, Abrams. Approved.Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 5141.4 Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect for a second and final reading. Abrams, Gombos. Approved.Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 5145.4 Americans with Disabilities Act/Section 504 for a second and final reading. Karvelis, Gombos. Approved.Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 5141.21 Administering Medication for a second and final reading. Karvelis, Abrams. Approved.Unanimous.**

#### POLICY REVIEW, FIRST READING

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 5125 Student Records; Confidentiality for a first reading. Gombos, Hocker. Approved.Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 5131.21 Aggressive and Violent Behavior for a first reading. Abrams, Gombos. Approved.Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Policy 5144.1 Restraint and Seclusion for a first reading. Gombos, Karvelis. Approved.Unanimous.**

Mrs. Gombos questioned the use of ER9 rather than Region 9 in the title of the policies and the complications that could arise if one of the boards needs to alter the policy to fit specific board/school needs.

Policy 5131.21, Aggressive and Violent Behavior is the bullying policy. Mrs. Pin will present more specific information on this policy, and the Safe School Climate Plan, at the January board meeting.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Head of School: Dr. McMorran asked members of the leadership team to report on their areas. Athletic Director, Mike Santangeli, reported the fall sports season was very successful with more than 400 students participating in sports. He announced students who achieved recognition. Paula Panos, Guidance Department reported that 949 college applications (from 59% of the senior class) had been processed, with 419 opting for early action and 39 for early decision. Patti Roszko reported on the performance of students with special needs. Of the students with IEPs, 19.3% received A range grades, 35% received B range grades and 27% received C range grades. Ann Kipp provided a progress report on the NEASC preparation work and a progress report on Connecticut Secondary School Reform. Mr. McMorran provided a copy of the November Noteworthy News that included achievements, recognitions and activities of staff and students

Dr. McMorran recognized retiring board members, Tom Logie and Margo Abrams for their participation on the board and service to the students and staff of Joel Barlow High School. On behalf of the leadership team, he presented each with a token of appreciation.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Ms. McPadden reported the ER9 Curriculum Steering Committee met in October to review the unit planner that will be the format design for the

online curriculum mapping. The ER9 Wellness Committee met in October to review new requirements for local wellness policies. The committee now includes two Barlow students. The Tri-State Consortium follow-up on the Science curriculum occurred in November. A report on the visitation will follow. Grade 8 science teachers from Easton and Redding met with Julie McTague, JBHS department chair, and Beth Sugden, JBHS instructional leader for science, to discuss the science curriculum and share diagnostic data. The data will be used to inform instruction at both levels for a smoother transition process. The Veterans Day program at JBHS was inspiring to all participants and a wonderful way to honor resident veterans.

Director of Finance & Operation: Mrs. Sullivan reported the refinancing of just under \$10,000,000 of debt reduced the interest rate from 4% to 2.3%, and will result in a savings of \$757,000 over the course of the bond. Mrs. Sullivan reported health insurance claims are trending as expected. The fuel oil price has not been locked in as yet (but consumption has been limited due to the mild temperatures through early December).

Superintendent: Dr. Josefsberg echoed Dr. McMorran's comments of appreciation for the service of Mrs. Abrams and Mr. Logie on the Region 9 Board of Education. He also commented on positive school spirit displayed at the Thanksgiving Day football game in Weston, other athletic competitions he attended, and the Veteran's Day celebration.

#### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Karvelis reported the Committee met to discuss the website vendor and they were in agreement with the recommendation to use Edline as the website vendor. In addition, the Committee is continuing to do community outreach and interface. Work is being done to effect stronger connections through internships and other programs with the Danbury and Bridgeport Hospitals. The Committee is exploring discussion panel opportunities for Barlow seniors and their parents under the heading of "The challenges of Moving on". The Committee has asked the school administration to set a date for the second annual Realtors breakfast for Easton and Redding realtors.

#### PENSION COMMITTEE

Mr. Karvelis reported on the Pension Committee work and the investment structure of the pension for the non-certified employee group. The portfolio value is approximately \$3.1 million. The Committee will meet again in late January 2012.

#### AGENDA CHANGE

**Motion: move to change the agenda to move the executive session to this point in the meeting. Gombos, Karvelis. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Motion: move to recess to executive session for discussion regarding contract negotiations with the JBSEA support staff collective bargaining agreement. Gombos, Karvelis. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting recessed at 9:00 pm. Board members moved to the small conference room for the executive session. Mrs. Sullivan and Dr. Josefsberg were invited to be present.

#### RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 9:07 pm

#### NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

Mrs. Gombos noted that the contract with the support staff expired on June 30, 2011 and the new contract was not ratified by that time (failing to pass by one vote). The board negotiations team and the support staff team then

reached a new agreement, including minor changes, and this proposal was ratified by a large margin of the support staff yesterday.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the Chairman to sign the contract agreement for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2015 with the JBSEA as recommended. Gombos, Karvelis. Approved.Unanimous.**

Mrs. Gombos added that the contract includes increases as follows: Year 1, 1.9%; Year 2, 2.0%; Year 3, 2.0%; Year 4, open negotiation for salary increase. Insurance premium share increases are as follows: Year 1, 13.5%, Year 2, 14%, Year 3, 14.5%, and Year 4, to be negotiated. [Note that the current school year 2011/12 is Year 1 of the JBSEA contract.] Mrs. Gombos noted that Region 9 has a history of always negotiating contracts rather than going to mediation and/or arbitration.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeanne Wendschuh, Redding: Mrs. Wendschuh thanked outgoing board members, Mr. Logie, Mrs. Abrams and Dr. Shapiro, for their service to the students and the taxpayers of Easton and Redding. She expressed her gratitude for the board's focus on education and the financial interests of the taxpayers.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Logie thanked the public of Easton and Redding for allowing him to serve on the Region 9 board over the past four years. He noted that it was an honor to work with the talented professionals in the JBHS administration, a privilege to serve current and future students of Joel Barlow High School, and a pleasure to work with fellow members of the Region 9 board of education.

Mrs. Gombos thanked both Mr. Logie and Mrs. Abrams for their service, adding how valuable Mr. Logie was during the negotiation of staff contracts.

Mrs. Abrams commented that she enjoyed serving on the board and working with the administration.

Mr. Lewis thanked both Mrs. Abrams and Mr. Logie for their service to the students, administrators, board members and communities of Easton and Redding. He presented each with a book, the biography of Joel Barlow.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move to adjourn the meeting. Macchio, Karvelis.Approved.Unanimous.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Logie, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday