

*Filed subject to approval  
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Kimberly Keil, Assistant Redding Town Clerk  
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REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING  
John Read Middle School Community Room

On YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSJhKa9oQfe3lydov\\_I-EvA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSJhKa9oQfe3lydov_I-EvA)

October 3, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Parkin, Hoffman, Oulton, Gibbons, Shanahan, Belfatto, Sadana (Remote)

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson-Ugol, Scrofani

Others: 5

CALL TO ORDER

C. Parkin called the Redding Board of Education Special meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the minutes of September 5, 2023 Regular Meeting noting Chris Parkin indicated Vicki Cram had announced her retirement, not actually retired. (Gibbons, Shanahan). Approved. Unanimous.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Meredith Dutra, 62 Picketts Ridge Rd, first CT BOE meeting. From NY with 16 years experience in education. She had concerns about the new ELA curriculum which Ms. D'Angelo explained very clearly. Ms. Dutra would like to know if more information regarding the new curriculum will be shared with all K-2 parents.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Dr. McKinnon will be presenting student achievement reports and the district and school improvement plans. Therefore, in place of the principals speaking now he asked if anyone had questions regarding the reports they submitted.

Dr. Pierson-Ugol provided an overview of the professional learning activities that will be taking place Friday. There will be no school and teachers will be engaged in learning primarily about CCT.

S. Scrofani presented on the current year spending, noting it is as anticipated. The Budget Object Summary for FY2023-2024 was not provided as not all salaries are encumbered, however the FY2022-2023 was reviewed. A new format for Employee Healthcare Benefits Account Report was provided. It did not include the transfers from last year as they have not deposited into the bank account yet. Format, contributions and spending was discussed. S. Scrofani will send the report to Board members ahead of meetings going forward.

## BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Committee, M. Hoffman reported on the improvements of the kindergarten and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level areas. M. D'Agostino noted they did not take any actions at the recent meeting but it was good to have the committee gather and see the work that was done over the summer. C. Parkin noted that in keeping with the town's long range financial plan, the committee will try to meet before the November meeting to develop a revised capital plan to be approved at Redding BOE and presented to the town. Dr. McKinnon noted that for new kindergarteners the change in that area may not be as evident, listing improvements made in both schools and how they align with goals for the schools overall. M. Hoffman noted that kindergarten drop off and the morning routine was well organized.

Curriculum Committee, L. Gibbons reported that the meeting was held 3 weeks ago and no actions were taken. Science of reading updates and math curriculum were reviewed. 5 year curriculum plan was discussed and will be uploaded to the website for parents.

## DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CLOSE FY 2022-2023

Overview of unexpended funds allocations was reviewed. All amounts approved in June 2023. 7 budget categories were discussed, and the amounts over/under budget. \$320k was deposited into the Health Benefits account and the line item was not over extended. Some line items were overextended and are offset by line items with a surplus, resulting in a positive amount in the overall budget. Line items such as transportation for special education are under budget due to keeping students in the Redding schools. It is noted that the special education line item is subject to fluctuation not knowing if new high needs students will move in or leave. Question was raised, do we zero out the budget line items using inter-category budget transfers which was previously required by the auditor. The transfer policy is discussed. S. Scrofani was looking for clear guidance on how the close of FY should look. The report, divided into the categories that are over/under with a narrative as to how funds are used is deemed most helpful. It is also noted that a uniform process across all 3 boards would be preferred. It is noted that knowing which budget line items have a consistent surplus is helpful so they may be discussed in future FY budgeting discussions.

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the Finance Director's Fiscal Year End 2023 Closing Report as presented. (Hoffman, Gibbons). Approved. Unanimous.**

## REVIEW OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REPORTS

Dr. McKinnon noted that we do now have a strategic plan that is on the website and then student reviewed achievement in 3 sections: Testing Data (types of assessments, Smarter Balanced Assessments(SBA) results, summative and formative assessments), District Improvement Plan (high impact instructional strategies, focus areas), and School Improvement Plans (actions steps). He reiterated student assessment is sorted into 2 categories: Formative assessment and Summative assessment. Formative takes place during the student learning. Summative assessment takes place after the learning has taken place and is intended to summarize how the student learned. Summative assessments are usually standardized and may be used to compare achievement within or across districts. More impact is derived from formative assessments.

SBA's are completed by grades 3-8 and are broken down into English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Computer Adaptive. Grades 5 and 8 complete the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) which is administered on the computer. Testing done in May 2023. Results are reported as follows: Level 1, does not meet the achievement standard; Level 2, approaching the achievement standard; Level 3, meets the achievement standard; and Level 4, exceeds the achievement standard. Students at Level 3 are on track to move to the next grade.

SBA results reviewed showed our ELA scores dropped by ~1.6% (8.4% lower than Easton, 6.7% lower than the DRG). Dr. McKinnon cautions that there are many variables at play between schools and districts. The aim is to reach an overall improvement target in 2026. Noting there are some grade level improvements. Math scores dropped by ~0.2% (4.5% lower than Easton, 6.3% lower than the DRG). The 2026 target is 80%. We have approved a new

math curriculum and hired a K-8 math coordinator, which is an investment made by several of our surrounding DRA schools.

Overview of High Needs population. Dr. McKinnon listed the 8 special subgroups the state identifies as High Needs and achievement for those students was discussed in terms of the 4 aforementioned levels in ELA and math. Approximately 58% of students not meeting or approaching the achievement standard in Redding in both categories. Easton's numbers vary slightly, but they have a different number of high need students. 16% of Redding students are Special Education vs. 14% in Easton. Redding has 87 students on 504 plans vs 65 students in Easton. It is important to make sure we have interventions in place, a robust SRBI system, and adequate number of special education therapists. Questions are raised with regards to comparing us to Easton and how the variances would change if the population numbers were the same.

Dr. Pierson-Ugol presented comparing High Needs sub groups and noted that it may be concluded that students who are learning English, or have an IEP are more likely to struggle with an assessment that is based on grade level standardized targets, but that is not the entire story. Because each student in each grade accounts for ~1% our numbers may look different from large school districts. The new K-8 math coordinator and curriculum is anticipated to have a positive impact and provides some assurance that what the students are learning is what they will be tested on. The new curriculum will have more formative assessments. In addition we now have a multilingual learning teacher to support the interventions for English learning students being pulled out for instruction. Alignment to standards along with curriculum implementation and the fidelity of curriculum implementation is a focus for building leaders and content specialists. High turnover of student population since Covid is noted, questioning how long students have been in Redding's education system and how that can affect where to target intervention. Dr. Pierson-Ugol will attempt to report on that using an existing tool at her disposal.

Melissa Labroschiano and Kim Roy reviewed the RES grade level cohort data in math. Gains from 76 to 81% are seen as the cohort moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. High accolades go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teams. Alignment to the standards is supporting growth as well. Last year's district improvement plan and school improvement plan have opened up opportunities for success as well. Collaboration with special education resource teachers is creating a better alignment and contributing to overall improvement in student performance. Evaluations are taking place in classrooms to be certain that learning is aligned to state standards.

Jennifer Desmarais and Kyla Dunn reviewed JRMS grade level cohort data in math. Only grades 6 to 7 experienced an increase. Ms. Desmarais feels strongly that good instruction will be honored with strong test scores but emphasis needs to be placed on purposeful instruction that is aligned with the curriculum and state disciplined specific standards.

Melissa Labroschiano and Kim Roy reviewed the RES grade level cohort data in ELA. Gains from 63 to 75% are seen as the cohort moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. It is thought that scores will continue to improve. Students have been challenged appropriately, work has been done with regards to the science of reading and identifying opportunities to assess gaps in learning. It is noted that the current 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes were the grades very much affected by Covid. Dr. McKinnon notes the base is becoming stronger.

Jennifer Desmarais and Kyla Dunn reviewed JRMS grade level cohort data in ELA. Again, only grades 6 to 7 experienced an increase. Ms. Roy notes that 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Redding used to operate a middle school model and this was changed to a team set up. It is noted that other schools in the DRG have 6<sup>th</sup> graders experiencing the dip in scores as they adjust to the middle school model. Ms. Desmarais feels that students at JRMS need to be challenged across all disciplines.

NGSS Science in Grades 5&8 were reviewed. Performance dropped in both grades and it is felt that the drop is related to reading. Dr. McKinnon reviewed using data to improve specific skills. Key points and targets were reviewed for goals to improve skills.

## DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

District goals: High Impact Instructional Strategies, Student Achievement, and Family Engagement & Climate.

High Impact Instructional Strategies 7 proposed ER9 indicators were listed. All 7 are able to be evaluated and produce data. Student Achievement goals are very specific: by June 2024 78% of students will meet or exceed goal (level 3&4) in reading, 77% of students will meet or exceed goal in math, and 77% of grade 5 students and 85% of grade 8 students will meet or exceed goal in science. Family Engagement & Climate goal, by Spring 2024 90% of parents will report they know how their child is doing in school, 90% of students will be able to identify trusted adults in their school, and 90% of parents will report their child believes students in school are kind. Overall plan was shared to view but not gone into detail.

#### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

School goals: High Impact Instructional Strategies, Student Achievement (Summative) Student Achievement (Formative), and Family Engagement & Climate. Melissa Labroschiano and Kim Roy reviewed the school improvement plan for RES. Improving student learning outcomes of summative /standardized measures: by June 2024 74% of grade 3 students and 81% of grade 4 students will meet or exceed goal (level 3&4) in reading; 79% of grade 3 students and 83% of grade 4 students will meet or exceed goal in math. C. Parkin expressed concerns that we are aiming for DRG average and may be reaching too high without an achievable plan. M. Labroschiano feels they are an appropriate goal. Improving student learning outcomes of formative measures: using the Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments 70% of kindergarten students will score at or above benchmark by June 2024 and 75% of grades 1-4. Using the Exemplars assessment 80% of grades k-4 students will score at or above benchmark by June 2024. Since Exemplars is new to RES EOY baseline data from the aforementioned testing was used to create goals. It is noted that those students who make great improvements in levels 1 and 2 are not accounted for in these goals, but are equally as important achievements. Focus will also be placed on engaging families with volunteer opportunities and celebrations. Jennifer Desmarais and Kyla Dunn reviewed the school improvement plan for JRMS. Improving student learning outcomes of summative /standardized measures: by June 2024 80% of grade 5 and 6 students and 75% of grade 7 and 8 students will meet or exceed goal (level 3&4) in reading; by June 2024 88% of grade 5 students and 73% of grade 6 and 7 students, and 78% of grade 8 students will meet or exceed goal in math. This represents increases of 3-6% across grade levels. By June 2024 73% of grade 5 and 75% of grade 8 students will meet or exceed goal in NGSS Science scores representing a 5% increase. Improving student learning outcomes (formative measures) reading: by June 2024 80% of grade 6 and 7 students will meet growth targets according to NWEA MAP assessment. And a 4% growth in 8<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting the ERW benchmark using the PSAT (Spring); 80% of students will be at or above grade level in writing as measured by Teachers College Writing. Detailed data sheets have been created by K. Dunn for each student. Data is triangulated and specialists are notified which students need support. C. Parkin raised the question about how students who do not need intervention are being challenged. Extension activities are offered in the classroom and working independently. Focus areas were reviewed. Dr. McKinnon summarized what was reviewed and noted all will be finalized and put up online. He closed by saying we are all proud of our schools and the school leaders.

HEARING ON GRIEVANCE OF REA MEMBER (potential Executive Session): Postponed as the grievant requested a delay. No action taken and the matter is expected to be resolved in the next two weeks.

#### ADJOURNMENT

A Motion was made for Adjournment by C. Parkin. (Gibbons, Shanahan) Hearing no objections, C. Parkin adjourned the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Submitted by Stephanie Oulton  
Secretary, Redding Board of Education

Recorded by,  
Stephanie Oulton