

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons
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November 21, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.
Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Graziano, Johnston, O'Brien, Denny, Pampel, Thompson

Administration: McKinnon, D'Agostino

Others: 5 members of the public and staff, the Recording Secretary and the Videographer

CALL TO ORDER

C. Graziano called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the October 19, 2023 Regular meeting (Pampel, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the October 24, 2023 Joint ER9 Board of Education meeting (OBrien, Thompson) (4-0, 2 abstentions due to absence). Approved.

STUDENT COMMENT

Joel Barlow High School Student Government Representative, Owen Fellows, read from the prepared report *Noteworthy News*, highlights included: Barlow hosted 12 veterans for an educational Veteran's Day observance; 11 students were selected to participate in this year's Connecticut Music Educators Association Western Region Music Festival; Barlow debaters Winegar, Kiefter, Nani, Jortner, and Cho won awards in the debate tournament; the homecoming game and dance were well-attended after the football team's win; Owen thanked the parents involved in setting up and decorating the gym and organizing the events for Homecoming, the girl's volleyball team won the SWC Championship; Audrey Gil won the 100 Free for the swimming SWC Championship and is the Class S Champion, and the girl's team did well overall in the Championship with the 200 free relay team placing 2nd, and the 400 team placing fourth.

Board members inquired about the significance of Veteran's Day as a school day rather than holiday and the success of Homecoming. Fellows recounted that although he didn't interact with any of the veterans during Veteran's Day, it's impactful to talk and learn from them as he had done in previous years. Passionate teachers like Mrs. Pinsky bridged the gaps, and put together a presentation for those in APUSH to supplement meeting the veterans. Chairwoman Graziano remarked it was great to see the accomplishments of the students and was happy to see everything getting "back to normal" and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Owen Fellows of 13 Ridgeway Road in Easton brought to the board's attention that the freshman, junior, and senior class councils have come together to advocate for making an open campus policy for Seniors permanent. He explained that there have been two successful pilot programs for Open Campus, however there is currently no permanent policy in place. Mr. Fellows pointed out some of the benefits of being able to go off campus during Study Hall periods; for instance taking a walk, being able to go back home, or stopping at the Ridge for lunch can boost a student's day. Further, since Seniors are transitioning into adulthood and many will be going to college after Barlow, Fellows urged that the board consider letting them exercise some responsibility by allowing them the freedom to safely exercise some independence. Fellows asked the Board to consider inviting him and Zac Colangelo (VP of Student Council) back for a future meeting where they could provide research and a more formal presentation.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Chairwoman Cheryl Graziano presented Mike D'Agostino with a plaque on behalf of the Region 9 Board of Education in honor of his many years of service to the Board of Education and his dedication to the students of Easton and Redding. Additionally, outgoing board member Sarah Lehberger (not in attendance) was thanked for her service on the Board of Ed and her dedication to students.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, wished everyone and the students a Happy Thanksgiving.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum - M L. Pampel said that the committee met last Wednesday where they received an update on the Art Pathways. There will be updates to come, but the art department is reviewing various courses that are offered. For example, there was a question if the foundational art class (Art I) should remain a required prerequisite for the majority of art classes.

Finance - T. Johnston said the committee met but there were no actions for the board to take at the moment. The committee discussed fiduciary updates to the investor policy statement (as it hasn't been updated in awhile) and a potential to-do of a direct buyout of the annuity for a portion of the pensioners in the pension plan and the direct benefit plan.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: NEST Project Update and Approval of Invoices

M. D'Agostino took a moment to talk about what the project has accomplished before providing an update. The new field with synthetic surface has been completed, dark sky compliant lights are installed, the parking area has been paved, to name a few. C. Graziano presented a slide of the timeline of the next steps in moving forward with the NEST project. C. Graziano explained that she and G. Denny attended a recent Redding town meeting to get an extension of the ARPA funds and to outline the options to deal with the waste water. There is a future meeting planned to review and present the final options for the waste water with the state DEP. M. D'Agostino reported that the RFP for the NEST building went out on October 25th, and responses are due back by December 8th. The responses will be reviewed with the BOE to determine the next steps of the design aspects of the project with regard to the available funding. The Fields and Facilities Committee will meet by Dec 11th in order to move forward with some decisions needed regarding funding. Options regarding the state requirements for dealing with the waste water from the NEST building were discussed. recommend an action to the full board and provide visibility to the public regarding the NEST project fundraising activity..

The amount of \$206,291.25 reflects the completion of site work, paving, painting of the parking lot, etc.

In response to board questions, M. D'Agostino answered that there is still work to be done in regards to the fencing, trees in the parking lot, and possible touch ups of curbing. The fabrication of the gates is included in the invoice, and M. D'Agostino will confirm if this also includes installation. Dr. McKinnon mentioned that the field will be closed in the winter (depending on weather). Security for the back lot is being explored.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve progress payment invoice #705930 from FieldTurf USA, Inc. in the amount of \$206,291.25 for the Joel Barlow Field Improvement Project and authorize the Director of Finance, Operations, and Technology to issue payment from the Project Bond Account Fund. (Denny, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

JBHS Service Employee Contract and JBEA Teachers Contract

C. Graziano asked the board to consider such contracts and signaled the recess of the meeting at 7:53 for private discussion of the contracts as had been negotiated by the Negotiations Committee and the unions.

Board returned from recess at 8:33pm.

Motion: Approve the contract between service employees International Union Local 2001 and the Board of Education Regional District 9 for the period July 1st, 2023 through June 30th, 2027 (Denny, Pampel). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: Approve the Board of Education contract of Regional School District 9 and Joel Barlow Education Association for the years 2024 through 2027 (O'Brien, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC MEMBER COMMENT

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

K. Thompson asked about the Special Services comparison data, to clarify the total number of identified special education students and whether or not it includes the 23 JBHS transition students. Dr. McKinnon replied that there are a total of 738 students in the program and that included the 23 transition students. It was clarified that those with 504 plans are not included in the prevalence rate and would be separate from those identified as special education students. The prevalence rate was stated at 17% with referrals increasing. G. Denny noted that it's wonderful that Unified Sports is expanding with plans for adding additional sports.

Ending the meeting, K. Thompson said it was a pleasure working with S. Lehberger on the policy committee and for two years on the board. C. Graziano thanked everyone for indulging her as chair and reviewed the bylaws as regards to the election of officers which will be at the next regular meeting in December.

ADJOURNMENT

C. Graziano made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education meeting be adjourned. (O'Brien/Thompson).
Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Submitted by Karen O'Brien
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education
Recorded by Liadan O'Connor