

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

5-25-2021, 7:30 PM

Regular Meeting Agenda

501 Kings Hwy East, CO Board Room

The public is invited to attend via WebEx Meeting Number

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

IN LIGHT OF COVID-19, AND PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 7B, THE TOWN IS CONDUCTING THIS MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE ONLY.

The best way to participate is to listen to:

1. FairTV's cable channel (channel 78 for Fairfield Cablevision customers); or
2. [FairTV's youtube education channel](#); or [FPS youtube channel](#); or
3. Call 408-418-9388, and use Meeting Number (access code): 173 463 8078

Please Note:

- ✓ Callers will be on mute and will not be heard by Board members.
- ✓ Limited live call-in Public Comment takes place at the beginning of the meeting (agenda item #3). Sign in [here](#) to pre-register and you will be un-muted when it is your turn to speak.
- ✓ The public is encouraged to send comments **on agenda items only** before or after the meeting by filling out a [public comment form](#) or sending an email to publiccomment@fairfieldschools.org. As you would in a public meeting, please include your name and home address with your comment. All comments received and verified will be posted to the BOE webpage or added to the minutes from this meeting with your Name and Home Address Only—your email address will be excluded.
- ✓ To view all agendas, minutes and enclosures, please click [here](#).

Board of Education Regular Meeting Agenda May 25, 2021, 7:30pm

1. Call to Order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Call-in Public Comment
(Pre-registration is required to call in for limited live public comment. Please click [here](#) to register your name and telephone number. During the meeting, your registered telephone number will be un-muted when it is your turn to speak. Please note: live public comment is limited to 2 minutes per person, thank you.)
4. Old Business
 - A. Approval of Superintendent's Recommended 2021-2022 Budget Adjustments
Recommended Motion: "that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent's Recommended 2021-2022 Budget Adjustments as enclosed."
(Enclosure No.1)
5. New Business
 - A. Approval of the Roger Sherman Building Project (State Project #051-0150) as Complete
Recommended Motion: "that the Board of Education accept the Roger Sherman Building Project (State Project #051-0150) as complete"
 - B. 2021-2022 Board Goal Discussion

6. Approval of Minutes

Recommended Motion: “that the Board of Education approve the 5-11-2021 Regular Meeting minutes”
(Enclosure No. 2)

7. Superintendent’s Report

- A. Reopening Update
- B. District Improvement Plan Update

8. Committee/Liaison Reports

9. Open Board Comment

10. Public Comment*

11. Adjournment

Recommended Motion: “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn”

** The public is encouraged to send comments **on agenda items only** (per BOE By-Law, Article V, Section 6) before or after the meeting by filling out a public comment form or sending an email to publiccomment@fairfieldschools.org. As you would in a public meeting, please include your name and home address with your comment. All comments received and verified will be posted to the BOE webpage or added to the minutes from this meeting with your Name and Home Address Only—your email address will be excluded.*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 8, 2021	6:30 PM Student Awards 7:30 PM Regular Meeting	Fairfield Warde High School 755 Melville Avenue
June 22, 2021	7:30 PM Regular Meeting	501 Kings Hwy East CO Board Room

RELOCATION POLICY NOTICE

The Fairfield Public Schools System provides services to ensure students, parents and other persons have access to meetings, programs and activities. The School System will relocate programs in order to ensure accessibility of programs and activities to disabled persons. To make arrangements, please contact the office of Special Education, 501 Kings Highway East, Fairfield, CT 06825, Telephone: (203) 255-8379.

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOE REQUESTED BUDGET ADJUSTMENT SCENARIOS
2021 - 2022

Enclosure No. 1 (Revised)
May 25, 2021

2
May 25, 2021

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
FTE's Scenario #1, #2, & #3	FTE's Scenario #4 & #5	Description	Scenario # 1 Supt. Recommended	Scenario #2	Scenario #3	Scenario #4	Scenario # 5	Notes
1		Open Choice Revenue	(\$78,000)				(\$78,000)	Add'l 26 students (26 x \$3,000) 74 already budgeted @ \$3,000 each
2		Open Choice Revenue		(\$444,000)				20-21 grant based on 10/1/20 enrollment of 74 students. Add'l 37 students = 111 (111 students x \$6,000) - \$222,000 already budgeted (74 x \$3,000)
3		Open Choice Revenue			(\$33,000)	(\$33,000)		Add'l 11 students (11 x \$3,000) 74 already budgeted @ \$3,000 each
4		Revenue Adjustments	(\$78,000)	(\$444,000)	(\$33,000)	(\$33,000)	(\$78,000)	
5		Health Insurance	(\$944,179)	(\$944,179)	(\$944,179)	(\$944,179)	(\$944,179)	Based on final 21-22 rates and open enrollment head counts the projected savings is \$1,030,156. A cut of \$944,179 leaves a balance of \$85,977 for additional head count changes during the year.
6		Pension Contribution	(\$109,821)	(\$109,821)	(\$109,821)	(\$109,821)	(\$109,821)	Final contribution provided with completion of 2020 Evaluation
7		LTD Insurance	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	Renegotiated rate
8		Life Insurance	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	Renegotiated rate
9		Benefit Adjustments	(\$1,111,000)	(\$1,111,000)	(\$1,111,000)	(\$1,111,000)	(\$1,111,000)	Benefit adjustments reflect updated information from third parties available after the BOE budget vote.
10		WAN Bid Award	(\$47,000)	(\$47,000)	(\$47,000)	(\$47,000)	(\$47,000)	Savings from recent bid award
11		COVID PPE	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	Moved to ESSER II grant
12		OT/PT Bid Award Savings	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	Projected savings from pending bid award
13	(3.00)	High School Certified Staff	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$300,000)	Portions of several FTE's adjusted mostly through attrition. Small reduction of .2 based on course enrollment. 1.8 FTE at FLHS / 1.2 FTE at FWHS
14	(1.00)	Central Office Secretary	(\$64,000)	(\$64,000)	(\$64,000)	(\$64,000)	(\$64,000)	
15		Add'l Sped Tuition Funding		\$366,000			\$4,121	Add'l funding for sped out-of-district tuition
16		Add'l Sped Evaluation Funding	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$55,000	\$59,121	\$100,000	Add'l funding for sped evaluations
17	0.90	Full art curriculum restoration				\$95,879	\$95,879	Restoration of elementary art with 70 minutes in Grade 5 and 55 minutes in Grade 4 (per 6 day cycle)
18	1.00	4th Grade at Holland Hill	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	Restore 4th Grade Math Academy
19		Other Adjustments	(\$811,000)	(\$445,000)	(\$856,000)	(\$856,000)	(\$811,000)	
20	(3.00)	Total Budget Adjustments	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,000,000)	Total 21 - 22 Budget Cut Approved by RTM on 5/3/21

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**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, May 11, 2021, 7:30PM**

NOTICE: A full meeting recording can be obtained from Fairfield Public Schools. Please call 203-255-8371 for more information and/or see the FPS website (under Board Meeting Minutes) for a link to FAIRTV and FPS YouTube.

Voting Summary

Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call

Chairman Christine Vitale called the Regular meeting to order at 7:33PM. Present were members Bonnie Rotelli, Jennifer Jacobsen, Trisha Pytko, Jessica Gerber, Christine Vitale, Nick Aysseh, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Jeff Peterson and Carol Guernsey. Others present were Superintendent Mike Cummings and members of the Central Office Leadership Team.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Peterson moved/Mr. Aysseh seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the following minutes from:

4-6-2021 Special Meeting; and
4-20-2021 Regular Meeting and
4-27-2021 Special Meeting”

Motion passed 9-0

Adjournment

Mr. Aysseh moved/Mr. Peterson seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.”

Motion passed 9-0.

Meeting adjourned at 10:58PM

Detailed Minutes

Public Comment

Laura Horne: Supports Math Academy and requests that it remain in place for future students. The program supports students with unique educational needs.

Anjali Sharma: Supports Math Academy and requests that it remain in place for future students. Has a younger child that would also benefit.

Bridget Perry: As a licensed clinical psychologist, wants specific research data that supports mitigation strategies that are being used. Kids are at extremely low infection and transmission rates and it is time to begin to foster a sense of reasonableness.

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Kimberly Grant: Given that teachers are vaccinated and schools are some of the safest places when it comes to COVID-19, requests no more barriers at lunch and an end to masks during recess and while seated at desks.

Kelly Sadick: Hopes for a discussion making masks optional, reflecting updated guidance from Governor. Outdoor transmission is almost nonexistent. Please make masks optional at recess.

Caitlin Giambalvo: Asked for plan to end the mask mandate in schools and follow the science. There is no standard for the fit or quality of masks; they are causing reading and speech delays and have the psychological effect of having students think they are constantly sick.

Recognition of Excellence

Mrs. Vitale recognized FWHS Head Principal, Paul Cavanna for receiving the award for the CT PTA Outstanding High School Principal. Mr. Cavanna fosters the school-home connection and is able to connect with students on a personal level. Ms. Jen Racioppo was also recognized as CT PTA Outstanding High School Teacher. Ms. Racioppo is very active with extracurricular activities and encourages students to think outside the box. Mr. Cummings thanked both educators and said their work is inspirational.

Mr. Cummings recognized and congratulated 37 all-state student musicians in choir, orchestra and band. He praised the hard work and talent of all students.

New Business

Third Quarter Financial Report

Mrs. Munsell reported on the 3rd quarter report as of March 31, 2021. Fairfield Public Schools is no longer in a deficit position. The projections are based on actual and projected expenses as of May 4, 2021; the projected 6/30/2021 balance is \$393,668. Equipment, general supply and instructional resource funds have been released.

Mrs. Munsell, Dr. Zavodjancik, Dr. Parrish and Mr. Mancusi responded to Board questions:

- Line 32 referencing curriculum writing includes funding for implementation guide updates and assessment documents. Some of the curricula reviews were pushed back one year but are on track for next year's budget.
- The security audit bid came in just under \$50K and work is underway to secure the awarded bid.
- The Food Service program can't have a negative cash balance. To be fiscally prudent, reserve funds will need to be added to it; federally subsidized programs cannot carry more than 3 months of expenses.
- The professional expenses referenced on line 17 includes OT/PT, consultations, outside evaluations and contracted speech therapists.
- End of year special education tuition projections will be provided. FPS received \$3.5M in excess cost. There was a reduction in outplaced transportation costs.
- Maintenance projects listed on Line 41 have not been completed. The painting account was frozen due to the deficit. The district is moving forward with the FLHS 2nd floor concession stand; the Warde dust collector equipment was repaired and has been operating correctly since April break. More information will be provided on the negative balance in the snow removal account.
- Preventive Maintenance RFPs are being reviewed and will be held until after July 1, as part of the 21-22 budget.
- Tent Questions:
 - ✓ Tents were purchased used, direct from the manufacturer. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly expressed concern over quality control and said tents were purchased from a non-approved list as a cost saving measure.

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- ✓ Risk Management determined that a certified contractor was needed to install, inspect and repair all tents; FPS is contracting with a local tent company to perform this work.
 - ✓ Additional financials regarding the tents will be provided.
 - ✓ It may be possible to repair the RLMS tent but a replacement cost will be provided.
 - ✓ FPS will most likely keep tents for future outdoor events. Mr. Aysseh noted that tents could become a revenue item with building rentals.
 - ✓ An additional tent will be rented for the FLHS Prom; the tent for Warde's Prom is owned by the district.
- FPS is working with the Town to sell surplus equipment.
 - The Meraki license is a tech item; more information will be provided.
 - Outside building rentals are expected to return to normal next year.

Presentation of Superintendent's Recommended 2021-2022 Budget Adjustments

Mrs. Vitale said town bodies reduced the BoE budget by \$2M and she welcomed Board comments on the Superintendent's recommendations.

Mr. Cummings thanked the Executive Directors and Head Principals for the tough work that identified reductions. Mrs. Munsell noted that the word 'consultation' should be removed from Line 14 in the enclosure.

Mr. Aysseh referenced the reductions in lines 12 and 13 as promising items at the core of the idea for structural change, without laying off staff.

Ms. Guernsey requested more information on the FTE reductions at the high schools. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she would not be in favor of a reduction in Social Studies FTE at this time. Mr. Cummings said the FTE reductions were identified in areas where enrollment has been low; class sizes remain at comfortable levels. He will follow up with exact details.

Several Board members asked about the health insurance savings variance in Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2. Mrs. Munsell said the projected savings in health insurance is \$1M, depending on the final enrollments. The variance shown in the scenarios is the easiest way to balance the cut based on Open Choice revenue. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mrs. Rotelli said the number should be consistent in both scenarios and Ms. Pytko said she found the variance confusing. Mr. Aysseh noted that using the same number from Scenario 1 would result in more money for Scenario 2.

Mr. Mancusi said he expects an increased need for both literacy and psychiatric evaluations in the 2021-2022 school year. Most of the evaluations are anticipated for existing special education students. The scope, range and cost of evaluations can vary widely. Ms. Pytko and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about using federal funds to cover evaluations but Mr. Cummings did not recommend that approach; the intent of the language in ESSER funding is to reach a broader population and be program-based, rather than used for individual student need. Mrs. Munsell added that using grant monies for special education could affect reimbursements.

Dr. Parrish will follow up with additional information on the Wide Area Network (WAN).

Mr. Cummings referenced the central office secretarial position and said some of the tasks may be rebalanced across central office with a distribution of work among the instructional office secretaries and a reconfiguration of the Medicaid position.

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Ms. Deasy said 19 retirements are projected and 16 are confirmed as of today.

Mr. Cummings will provide the completed ESSER grant application.

Open Choice Program Discussion - Budget Scenarios

Dr. Parrish said new Open Choice enrollments are available at all levels and are not limited to the elementary level. CES has extended the notification deadline to June 1 and she will provide additional funding information.

Mr. Aysseh said he supports Scenario 1 with a caveat on Open Choice slots, and suggested a 2-year approach, enrolling 15 students next year and 15 students the year after; raising the health insurance line to make up the difference. There are too many unknowns related to the pandemic and this is a more cautious approach. Mr. Aysseh said he does not support Scenario 2 because the reimbursement reverts to \$3K per student the following year, causing a fiscal cliff in future years. Ms. Pytko agreed and said a portion of Art and the Math Academy were recently cut from the budget; there is a need to discuss facilities before bringing in more students from another district; our kids need so much right now. Mrs. Rotelli supported the 3rd Scenario as proposed by Mr. Aysseh and said her main concern is supporting the well-being of Fairfield's current students; there is no need to rush for increased enrollments at this time.

Mr. Peterson asked for clarification on the acceptance rate and redistricting Open Choice students. Mr. Cummings said all indications are that FPS will meet its targeted enrollment. Redistricting requires further conversation.

Mrs. Guernsey expressed her concern regarding Scenario 2, asking how the district would fully meet the unique needs of new Open Choice students. Mr. Cummings said in general, there is always work to be done to be a more welcoming district for all new families.

Mrs. Jacobsen said she understands the commitment to Open Choice and will support Scenario 1 until there is a better revenue/net analysis of Scenario 2 over time, including the possibility of obtaining Bridgeport's allocation of federal funds. Mr. Cummings said he will provide the funding formula, inclusive of special education.

Ms. Pytko asked about the amount of ECS funding the Town receives. Mrs. Vitale said it would be minimal due to the wealth index; exact numbers can be provided. Mr. Peterson said there are also there are varying reimbursements for having 10 or more students are in a single facility.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly is interested in seeing the overall numbers. She expressed her support for Scenario 2 and said Fairfield Public Schools would deliver on a transformative life changing experience for these students.

Mrs. Gerber said she was on the Board in 2016 and voted in favor of the Racial Imbalance Plan with 100 Open Choice student enrollments. She supports Scenario 1 and said it is important to present the plan's progress to the State Board of Education.

Mrs. Vitale said she is leaning towards Scenario 2 and is not interested in a 3rd scenario. Her expectation is that staff will build capacity to benefit all students regardless of what their home addresses might be.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she is interested in bringing back the Math Academy next year as a 2-year commitment to address the needs of underserved and exceptional students; the district is not prepared to embed this into next year's

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curriculum. Mr. Cummings said this is a valid concern and moving forward with that option will result in a very short timeframe to identify and enroll students. Ms. Pytko said she does not fully support the Math Academy because it doesn't meet the needs of all students that qualify.

Mrs. Vitale asked the Board to submit any additional budgeting ideas to Mr. Cummings.

Mrs. Jacobsen said it would be helpful to have preliminary thoughts on using ARP for the 21/22 budget.

Update on ESSER II and American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Mr. Cummings reported on ARP ESSER, or ESSER III. The federal government has identified ESSER I as surviving, ESSER II as thriving, and the ARP ESSER as transforming. A requirement in the grant is to reserve 20% to address learning loss and the needs of under-represented sub groups. The grant language includes 'an equity focused lens' which needs more clarity. The timeline is tight. On May 17, the district can electronically sign 'assurances' after which 2/3 of the grant money can be obligated. On June 23, FPS will have to complete a safe return plan and make it available on the website; with an update required every 6 months. Public and stakeholder input will be required. The preliminary understanding is that mitigation strategies will still be required in the fall. The grant application is due in mid-August and runs through the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Mr. Cummings confirmed that the total amount for the grant came in at \$2.9M. Ms. Deasy added that summer staff positions are being posted and the hiring process has begun. Dr. Parrish said that letters to students will be distributed by early next week.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Peterson moved, Mr. Aysseh seconded that the Board of Education approve the following minutes from:

- 4-6-2021 Special Meeting; and
- 4-20-2021 Regular Meeting and
- 4-27-2021 Special Meeting.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Superintendent's Report

- Mr. Cummings thanked Mr. Cavanna and his staff at Warde, and the reporting student for immediately addressing an issue at Warde. The goal remains for everyone to feel safe in Fairfield's schools. Intolerant behavior will be appropriately addressed by staff.
- Mr. Cummings thanked Mrs. Hermsen for putting together the dazzling student art work display that is featured on the website.
- Mr. Cummings reported that he does not have the authority to ignore the mask guidance from DPH.
- Mr. Cummings thanked the Prom Committees for ensuring that fun prom events with dancing will take place. The committees decided to have food trucks, with students taking away food at the end of the prom.
- Both high schools held virtual events and engaged alumni to discuss life after high school.
- Dr. Parrish said elementary field days and middle school graduations/awards ceremonies will take place. The 8th grade dance will not take place.

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Committee/Liaison Reports

Mr. Peterson reported for the Finance Committee: The handout with structural change ideas is preliminary and more ideas are encouraged for future discussion. *Mrs. Jacobsen* added that it may be best to first have a conversation about goals. *Mr. Peterson* and *Mr. Aysseh* agreed and said a special meeting in a workshop setting may work best. *Mrs. Vitale* added that there is still work to do on the Board's redistricting goal and there will be a need to refocus on work regarding ARP. *Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly* wanted to move away from the term 'structural change' and instead use economic efficiencies; it may be possible to include stakeholders such as the RTM Education Committee in the workshop.

Mrs. Gerber reported for the Mill Hill Building Committee: The project is 50% complete, with the plan to have the build done by November and complete by spring 2022. A Board tour can be scheduled next week for those interested. It was a sad first meeting without Tom Quinn, but Jason Li and Melanie Ruggieri have stepped up as co-Chairs.

Ms. Pytko reported for CES: An Open House for a newly purchased facility will be advertised once the process is complete and the information is public.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reported for the Policy Committee: Grading policy discussions with staff are ongoing and there will be a need to reexamine the expiring COVID policies.

Mrs. Vitale reported for the Board of Health: The Pfizer vaccine was recently approved for children 12 and over. Fairfield is now in the orange zone and the trend downward continues with 60-70% of Fairfield residents currently vaccinated. A big thanks to all school nurses for School Nurse Appreciation Day – school nurses are the keys to keeping our schools open and our kids healthy.

Mr. Cummings added that fully vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine. Positive trends continue which may result in examination of the 7 or 10 day test/quarantine requirements. Multiple vaccine appointments are available in the surrounding area.

Open Board Comment

Mr. Aysseh thanked the PTA for all their work to recognize teachers during teacher appreciation week.

Mr. Peterson said Fairfield Warde High School will have a production of "Sunday at the Park" in Warde's courtyard this weekend. Tickets are \$10 and bring your own chairs.

Mrs. Vitale said the PTA reflections contest had multiple Fairfield winners that are listed on the CTPTA website.

Adjournment

Mr. Aysseh moved, *Mr. Peterson* seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:58PM

Written Public Comment:

Jennifer Moy: Supports Math Academy; asks for reconsideration to include funding in next year's budget. There is no plan in place to replicate a program for high achieving math students in each elementary school.

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Shannon Messina: Supports Math Academy and opposes decision to cut it from the budget. It offers an amazing opportunity for like-minded children to interact every day all day for the two years leading up to middle school.

Amy Sperrazza: Requests no barriers at lunch and an immediate stop to masks during outdoor recess and while children are seated at their desks. It is time to follow the science.

Respectfully submitted by

Jessica Gerber

Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary