

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, March 8, 2022, 7:30 PM**

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 7:37PM. Present were members Bonnie Rotelli, Jennifer Jacobsen, Carol Guernsey, Jessica Gerber, Christine Vitale, Nick Aysseh, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Jeff Peterson and Crissy Kelly. Others present were Superintendent Mike Cummings, members of the central office leadership team and approximately 20 members of the public.

Old Business

Mrs. Jacobsen moved/Mrs. Guernsey seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the UConn Research Study: An Institutional View of High School Reading Programs.”

Motion passed 9-0.

At 10:58PM, Mr. Aysseh moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to extend the meeting for thirty minutes.

Motion passed 8-1 (Mrs. Rotelli, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Guernsey, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mrs. Kelly in favor; Mr. Peterson against.)

New Business

Approval of Policy C-19.12/5141.3, Students: Health Assessments and Immunizations

Mrs. Jacobsen moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve amending Policy C-19.12/5141.3, Students: Health Assessments and Immunizations.”

Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Guernsey seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the following minutes:

- 1-27-2022, 2-3-2022 and 2-8-2022 Special Meeting Minutes
- 1-27-2022 and 2-15-2022 Regular Meeting Minutes.”

Motion passed 9-0.

At 11:27PM, Mrs. Rotelli moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to extend the meeting to 11:45PM.

Motion passed 6-3 (Mrs. Rotelli, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Guernsey, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Kelly in favor; Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson against).

Adjournment

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

Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 11:37PM

Detailed Minutes

Mrs. Vitale acknowledged the teachers presenting the After-School Program Update and requested and received unanimous Board consent to move item 6B ahead of item 5A.

Student Reports

Mr. Martins and Ms. Childers reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School: Sophomore students will attend the 'No Place for Hate' assembly tomorrow; juniors enjoyed the return of the badminton tournament; the in-school online SAT will take place on March 23 and 25; multiple events are scheduled for PI day on March 14, including puzzles and a pie eating contest; the Mock Trial Team placed 3rd in the CT Civics competition and won the award for best lawyer and witness; Girls Gymnastics won the Class L State Championship with Ava Golding as Best All-Around total; the Cheerleading team won the coed state championship; the combined Ludlowe/Warde hockey competed in the FCIAC finals but lost to Ridgefield; and Anna Keeley won the Girls New England 1 Mile Class LL Track Championship even though she lost a shoe during the race.

Ms. Fekete reported for Fairfield Warde High School: The March 1 blood drive was very successful and exceeded expectations; the Career Center held an information session on Housatonic and Norwalk Community Colleges; the PTA is sponsoring a virtual program on wellness strategies for freshman and sophomores; the in-school SAT will be held on March 29 and 30; 'music in school month' is being celebrated with various student performances in the front entrance; student winners of the PTA Reflections contest were celebrated; the Boys Basketball will compete in States; congratulations to the 170 lb. New England wrestling champion Will Ebert; congratulations to the Girls Gymnastics team for recently qualifying for the New England competition.

Public Comment

Frank Sahagian, Retired FPS Teacher and Fairfield Resident: Thanked Mr. Cummings and the administrators for being flexible and listening to the teachers' concerns regarding the middle school block schedule WIN period.

Old Business: After School Intervention Program - Update

Mr. Cummings said the after-school program has been a needed resource for some time and is a new initiative for Grades 6-12, funded by the ARP ESSER grant. Once the grant funding is expended, the program may be funded in the FPS operational budget. Dr. Parrish presented the update with secondary principals and site coordinators. The program was launched in November 2021. Students were invited to participate based on meeting 3 out of 5 criteria: (1) SRBI, (2) assessments, (3) current and prior year grades, (4) teacher recommendation and (5) chronic absenteeism. The program typically runs twice a week to coincide with the late buses. High school participants also have the opportunity to participate in SAT prep through a partnership with Alpha Prep. Overall, the students reported feelings of increased confidence through the supportive mentorship environment. Attendance data for each school site was reviewed and principals reported that students benefit academically as well as socially with executive functioning supports. Measures of student success will be reported at a later date.

The team responded to Board questions:

- The Warde SAT prep begins next week; there are currently 4 Warde juniors participating.
- Participation rates at each school differ due to program qualifying factors.
- Students who initially refused the invitation to participate due to conflicts with sports or other activities can join at any time.

- The program continues to evolve at each school. RLMS will be sending out a second tier of invitations; FLHS has rolling admissions; FWHS tailored the program after a mentorship program.
- High School National Honor Society students have been helping tutor students through a long-established program that works well.
- The Alpha Prep instruction is geared towards students who are presently not meeting graduation requirements.
- Student progress will be measured against the same qualifying criteria. Students are learning self-management skills through their relationships with their mentors; students want to return when they feel supported.

Mrs. Rotelli said it was nice to hear about partnerships and collaborations and wanted to know how to bring executive functioning help into the regular school day to help more students.

Mr. Cummings said the program has proved extremely valuable and he thanked the site supervisors for building a program that the district has not seen before. While addressing learning loss, students are also connecting with the community. This approach to kids needs to live beyond the ARP ESSER grant.

Presentation: Social Studies Curriculum – Status Update

Dr. Zavodjancik, Ms. Olivere, Mr. Moitoso, Ms. Souza, Ms. Kilcourse and Ms. Tietjen presented the Social Studies Curriculum Status Update. The C3 Framework, college, career and civic life, is in practice at elementary, middle and high school levels. Examples included unit studies, cross-curricular opportunities and student work. The elementary level partners with the Fairfield Museum for assured experiences that include a community scavenger hunt and a walking tour. Average FPS student 20-21 test scores for AP US History, AP Modern European History, AP US Govt. and Politics, and AP Comparative Govt. and Politics, were all higher than state and national average scores. The African-American, Black, Puerto Rican and Latino Studies course was recently developed due to a CT statutory change, and a state K-8 model curriculum is expected by January 2023. Next steps include the development of a social studies sub-committee for ELA curriculum review, expansion of culturally responsive curriculum and growth of the Early College Experience.

The presenters responded to Board questions:

- High school enrollment in the Contemporary United States History course has declined; the course hasn't run in the last 2 years, possibly due to the number of choices available. Ms. Souza gave additional reasons: (1) fulfilling a civics requirement can be a barrier, (2) some students felt the course was redundant, (3) some students reportedly didn't have enough room in their schedules.
- The new AA/B/PR/L course will have one section at each high school next year; FLHS has 22 students and FWHS has 17.
- The Social Studies/ELA sub-committee is a new concept intended to capture the natural connection between the two subject areas; Mr. Cummings credited Ms. Olivere and Dr. Swingler for their work in making this happen.
- There haven't been any significant changes to the 2016 Board-approved curriculum but there have been shifts in implementation. Ms. Souza said there is a reexamination of the chronological approach and a move towards inquiry-based assessments. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said opinions are important, but it has to begin with knowing things.
- Mr. Cummings said he will look into DRG-level AP score data for comparison. AP provides national and state level data.
- The curriculum is identical for each level, although teacher delivery may differ. Teachers share materials and work closely together to ensure students are getting the same experience.

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- Dr. Zavodjancik said the district will review the CSDE model curricula once it is complete in 2023-2024.
- AP Psychology enrollment is monitored for a variety of reasons. Mr. Aysseh asked whether there would be FTE impacts if the course was offered to underclassmen.

Mrs. Vitale thanked the group for the presentation and said the classes produce actively engaged students.

Old Business

Approval of UConn Research Study

Mrs. Jacobsen moved, Mrs. Guernsey seconded that the Board of Education approve the UConn Research Study: An Institutional View of High School Reading Programs.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Update: Middle School Block Schedule

Dr. Parrish, Ms. Tiley, Mr. Formato and Ms. Banick presented the update on the middle school block schedule. The Guiding Principles and timeline were reviewed. Based on teacher feedback, the schedule was revised to exclude the WIN period. Collaborative work will continue with FEA to identify the best intervention system for implementation in the 23-24 school year. The schedule includes a 25-minute homeroom and five 65-minute block periods per day. Each of seven classes occurs five times in a 7-day rotation and snow days will not change the rotation. This increases the number of instructional minutes and reduces the time spent in transitions. Students will continue to receive all of their special education and related services. The schedule is expected to be finalized in June, after PD, pilot days and parent information sessions are conducted.

The presenters responded to Board questions:

- Homeroom will support small group instruction, intervention, flex-time, general teacher check-ins, SPED Learning Centers and executive functioning support. Staff feedback was that Homeroom is important for a lot of interventions; it is important and should be kept.
- Feedback will continue to be gathered. Parent feedback will most likely be gathered after the pilot days.
- Scheduling for students that take both band and chorus will be part of summer planning.
- Delaying implementation of the WIN period has no impact on the 22-23 budget.
- Music lessons are 30 minutes.

New Business

Community Partnership Program with University of Bridgeport

Mr. Mancusi Ms. Kirik and Mr. Sanzaro presented the proposed pilot program for the Community Partnership Program with the University of Bridgeport (UB). UB offers full immersion and access to campus buildings, departments, and recreational facilities, including the bowling area and pool room. UB offers ample private and dedicated work spaces for CPP students, teachers and staff. UB offers lunch passes and invitations to all campus activities and events. CPP Students will also have multiple job site offerings including the campus bookstore and registrar's office. The pilot program will continue through June 2022, and a determination will be made at that time whether to continue in 22-23. During the pilot program, FPS will also continue working to expand the CPP program at Sacred Heart University.

Mr. Mancusi responded to Board questions:

- The pilot program will cost \$8K for the semester through June 2022. Costs for 22-23 would be similar, \$8K per semester. Fairfield University has similar pricing. More information will be provided on 22-23 costs.
- Mr. Peterson said he appreciates thinking outside the box; the campus is nice. Mr. Aysseh said it looks very promising.
- The distance to University of Bridgeport is comparable to Sacred Heart University. Bus times must be within statutory limits.
- Current job sites are located in Norwalk, Bridgeport and Fairfield.
- A typical day for CPP is to spend 9am-11:30am on campus, followed by lunch then on to a job site.
- CPP will continue to foster relationships within Fairfield.
- Furniture will be moved by FPS and there will be no costs for phones or wifi.
- Notification regarding a campus tour will be sent out soon.

Mrs. Rotelli said she was disappointed the program was no longer at Fairfield University and thanked Mr. Mancusi for the offer to tour UB. She will be reaching out to SEPTA for feedback.

Mrs. Vitale said she had reached out to the First Selectwoman to help foster relationships within the community and welcomed the offer to tour UB. Conversations with Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University are continuing. Mrs. Vitale said she is a little concerned over bus times and will be reaching out for more information.

Mrs. Gerber said looking ahead to UB does not shut the door on other opportunities. Parents have expressed their concerns and feel that Fairfield University is more centrally located.

At 10:58PM, Mr. Aysseh moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to extend the meeting for thirty minutes.

Motion Passed: 8-1

Favor: Mrs. Rotelli, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Guernsey, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mrs. Kelly

Oppose: Mr. Peterson

Approval of Policy C-19.12/5141.3, Students: Health Assessments and Immunizations

Mrs. Jacobsen moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve amending Policy C-19.12/5141.3, Students: Health Assessments and Immunizations.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the policy expires at the end of June.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Guernsey seconded that the Board of Education approve the following minutes:

- 1-27-2022, 2-3-2022 and 2-8-2022 Special Meeting Minutes
- 1-27-2022 and 2-15-2022 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Superintendent's Report

Maintenance Projects

Mr. Papageorge reviewed the current maintenance projects:

- Districtwide retro-commissioning: Began at FLHS and held plan reviews with contractors. Due to conflicts with the Controls Project, the retro-commissioning will move to a different building.
- FLHS Controls Project: Ongoing conversations with the town.
- FLHS bathrooms: Contract is under review by the town attorney; it is expected to be approved at the March 14 BoS special meeting.
- FLHS scoreboard: Contract is under review by the town attorney; in order to avoid a long RFP process, a consortium may be used.
- Warde Cafeteria project: Will be addressed at the March 14 BoS special meeting.
- FWMS elevator project: Went out to bid in 2019 and was tabled with COVID. Plan to move this forward together with FLHS elevator project.
- RLMS roof: Contract is with the town attorney and will be addressed at the March 14 BoS Special Meeting.
- Burr boilers: Final approval received from RTM; reached out to engineers for design work and commissioning proposals.

Information was received from bond council. The bond agreement will be ready for Monday's BoS meeting, in an effort to advance the Fitts house rooftop unit replacement capital project.

Mrs. Gerber expressed her concerns regarding the possibility of project delays, leading to increasing costs. She asked about possible reasons for the bottleneck at the town level -- did anything change? Mr. Papageorge said he is working to get the projects done during the summer or by working double-time. The same process is being followed on projects; meetings with vendors are taking place and pricing is being reviewed. Mr. Cummings said there is concern over the continual back and forth with the Town and the delays that ensue; there are concerns with approval delays on the RLMS roof; the project can only be done over the summer.

Mr. Cummings said he is open to ideas for making the Town approval process run more smoothly.

Mr. Papageorge said the FLHS scoreboard is currently functioning.

2022-2023 Potential Budget Reductions

Mr. Cummings provided a list of ideas and preliminary thinking for the potential budget reductions. One of the things not on the list is the outcome of the high school course enrollment review that may impact FTE; that information is not yet available. Ms. LeBoriosis read through the list of options, which totaled \$4.2M. The BoS has requested \$2.5M in reductions.

At 11:27PM, Mrs. Rotelli moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to extend the meeting to 11:45PM.

Motion Passed: 6-3

Favor: Mrs. Rotelli, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Guernsey, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Kelly

Oppose: Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson

Draft

Mrs. Vitale said the BoF can restore funding or further reduce. The list is painful but can be considered structural change.

Ms. LeBoriosis responded to Board questions on the reductions list:

- The \$488K subtotal adjustments would be in addition to the \$2.5M cut.
- The state has not revealed any new information regarding the health insurance adjustment.
- It may be possible to finance the \$1.2M ask for tech capital over 4-5 years.
- Transferring Purchasing to the BoE would result in a savings for the Town.

Mrs. Vitale wanted to correct the record for the reported BoE savings in pension. The savings is \$100K, not \$500K as reported by the BoS.

Mrs. Jacobsen asked about looking at transportation distancing guidelines as a possible savings to the budget. Mr. Cummings said that is under review.

Mrs. Jacobsen asked if the state proposal related to social workers will impact the 22-23 budget. Mr. Cummings said that legislation could impact next year's budget, requiring an additional 2.5 to 3.0 FTE.

Mr. Cummings thanked the community, schools and staff for a smooth transition to mask-optional.

Committee/Liaison Reports

Mrs. Rotelli reported for SEPTA: The upcoming provider/resource fair is a great place to learn about what is available to families.

Open Board Comment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly wished good luck to all of the Odyssey of the Mind competitors on March 19.

Public Comment

Kathy Finlaw, CPP Parent: Why is the CPP program not in our Fairfield community? We have had a fabulous relationship with Fairfield University for 10 years. Parents deserve an answer.

Jennifer Biondo, CPP Parent and Special Education Educator: CPP should be in our community. Young adults should feel as welcomed in our community as they did in previous years. No one asked how parents, teachers or kids feel.

Nancy Ross, CPP Parent: The goal was to expand the relationship and now there is no relationship. Westport and Trumbull both send their kids to Fairfield. Transportation times to UB will be extensive.

Adjournment

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

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 11:37PM

*Respectfully submitted by Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary*