

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, June 14, 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, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Jeff Peterson and Crissy Kelly. Mr. Aysseh was not present. Others present were Superintendent Mike Cummings, members of the central office leadership team and approximately 20 members of the public,

Mrs. Vitale asked the Board to add an item to the agenda regarding recognition of athletic champions.

Mrs. Rotelli moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to add athletic champion recognition to the agenda. Motion passed 8-0.

Old Business

Approval of Riverfield Educational Specification for Partial Roof Project

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Riverfield Educational Specification for the Partial Roof Project”

Motion passed 8-0.

Approval of Sherman Educational Specifications for Partial Roof Project

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Rotelli seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Sherman Educational Specifications for the Partial Roof Project”

Motion passed 8-0.

Adoption of Policies

Adoption of Policy 4118.112 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education adopt Policy 4118.112 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace”

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Guernsey seconded to amend the policy on page C by deleting “Dr. Zakia Parrish, Executive Director of Operations and Processes” and replacing with “Executive Director of HR” and also changing the email address and phone number listed from “zparrish@fairfield.schools.org” and “203/255-8372” to

“titleX@fairfieldschools.org” and “203/255-8462”

Motion passed 8-0.

Original motion, as amended, passed 8-0.

Adoption of Policy 5145.4 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education adopt Policy 5145.4 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment”

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mr. Peterson seconded to amend the policy on page C by deleting “Dr. Zakia Parrish, Executive Director of Operations and Processes” and replacing with “Executive Director of HR” and also changing the email address and phone number listed from “zparrish@fairfield.schools.org” and “203/255-8372” to

“titleX@fairfieldschools.org” and “203/255-8462”

Motion passed 8-0.

Approved 6/28/2022

Original motion, as amended, passed 8-0.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Jacobsen moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the May 25 2022 special meeting minutes”

Motion passed 7-0-1 (Mrs. Rotelli, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Guernsey, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mrs. Kelly in favor; Mr. Peterson abstained).

At 10:52 Mrs. Jacobsen moved/Mrs. Guernsey seconded to extend the meeting to 11:15PM. Motion passed 6-2 (Mrs. Rotelli, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Guernsey, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mrs. Kelly in favor; Mrs. Gerber and Mr. Peterson against).

Adjournment

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

Motion passed 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:07PM.

Detailed Minutes

Mrs. Vitale asked the Board to add an item to the agenda regarding recognition of athletic champions. Mrs. Rotelli moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to add athletic champion recognition to the agenda.

Motion Passed: 8-0

Mrs. Vitale congratulated numerous spring athletic FCIAC champions at FLHS and FWHS, the Ludlowe Girls’ Tennis Doubles State Champions Ellie and Gabby Price; the Warde Boys’ Tennis Singles State Champion Petro Kuzmenok and the Warde Baseball Team State Champions.

Public Comment

Bob Smoler, FEA President: The FEA does not support the new grading regulation’s reassessment component. It represents a significant change in working conditions and is a burden to teachers.

Presentations

Early Literacy Presentation

Mr. Mancusi and members of the Early Literacy Academy team presented a program update. The program is based at McKinley Elementary School and was developed to meet the literacy needs of FPS’ most impaired elementary students with significant reading disabilities/dyslexia. Currently, the program has seven enrolled students and will expand by one class with seven additional students in the 2022-2023 school year. Students have demonstrated growth in overall reading ability, and student performance is trending towards closing the achievement gap within 1.5 to 2 years. Literacy coaches offer support and coaching and provide special education teachers with effective intervention methods.

Ongoing professional development will be provided by Literacy How staff including Dr. Margie Gillis, Allison Ibanez and Wendy North.

The team responded to Board questions:

- The program will have two designated, adjoining classrooms in 22-23.
- All available openings were offered to parents, but not everyone wanted to change schools. Having open spots allows opportunities for newly identified students to participate.
- Families will be given the option to remain in the McKinley feeder pattern if they choose.
- The program goal is to meet the literacy needs of all students in their home schools. A big part of the success is the affiliation with Literacy How and Margie Gillis. Training is coordinated with principals and literacy coaches, and ultimately will roll out to general education.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Mr. Cummings reported that nearly a year ago, Ms. Jacobsen had questioned the lack of SEL consistency across the district. Funding was directed to a committee, led by Ms. Leffert, to examine current SEL practices and make recommendations for a multi-year plan.

Ms. Leffert said the SEL Needs Assessment report gathered information from staff and parents via surveys and forums. CASEL resources were used to complete the CASEL districtwide SEL implementation rubric and the DESSA assessment universal screener was rolled out as a first step to gather data.

The 3-year multi-year plan was pulled together from all of the committee work and much of it is incorporated in the District Improvement Plan.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly questioned the measurement and accountability of PK and elementary goals in School Improvement Plans (SIPs) such as 'students and staff aiming to make each other feel physically and emotionally safe.' Dr. Zavodjancik said that re-designed SIP templates will be linked to smart goals.

Mr. Mancusi said very few opted out of the DESSA mini.

Ms. Leffert said she recommends the continuation of the steering committee next year and the incorporation of students and parents to form three subcommittees: Program Review, Professional Learning and SRBI and MTSS Data point Review. The State of CT is developing SEL habits for K-3 in curriculum documents.

Ms. Leffert responded to Board questions:

- Mrs. Jacobsen appreciated the broadness of the study. Ms. Leffert said the committee will determine the number of resources at each level.
- There is a community feel to each building that is different; schools should have the autonomy to identify what works best in their buildings. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said not all schools have the resources to know what is best and the district committee will be vital; this will be an investment of time. Ms. Leffert said the committee will be looking at research-based resources and does not expect every level to pick the same thing.
- It will be recommended that resources be posted on the website.
- High school students have not yet taken the DESSA; the state said it needed more time to work with Aperture. The DESSA will remain a free resource for the foreseeable future.
- There may be some overlap with school climate committees.
- An example of embedding SEL in curriculum is getting along with lab partners in science class.

Mr. Mancusi thanked Ms. Leffert for her work.

Old Business

District Improvement Plan

Mr. Cummings thanked the Board for submitting questions through the Q&A document, and he thanked the executive team for all the responses. Ms. Guernsey said the document was very helpful.

Dr. Zavodjancik clarified that STAR has not been on CT's Tier 1 list of acceptable assessments for some time. The new legislation centers around dyslexia for K-3 screeners, and the district has about 1 year to choose which one to use; adaptives can be used in upper grades. An assessment review with stakeholders will take place

Dr. Parrish said state data on suspension rates and other benchmark data is expected in the fall and will be reviewed with the Board.

Dr. Parrish said the middle school intervention plan will be identified more clearly in the 22-23 school year; it will be push-in and pull-out as appropriate but will not be the WIN period. Part of SRBI is identifying progress and adding levels of support as needed.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly expressed her concern that any revisions to the current school climate survey would make comparisons to previous years ineffective. Mr. Cummings said a very small percentage of parents respond to the survey; it would be best to establish a statistically viable survey with increased participation.

Mr. Cummings said there will be a web page dedicated to the current DIP and its previous versions.

Mrs. Vitale said the 22-27 DIP will be voted on at the next Board meeting.

Approval of Riverfield Educational Specification for Partial Roof Project

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded that the Board of Education approve the Riverfield Educational Specification for the Partial Roof Project.

Motion Passed: 8-0

Approval of Sherman Educational Specifications for Partial Roof Project

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Rotelli seconded that the Board of Education approve the Sherman Educational Specifications for the Partial Roof Project.

Motion Passed: 8-0

New Business

First Reading of Policies

First Reading of Policy 6141 Advanced Courses or Programs and Challenging Curriculum

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the policy encourages a path for students to enroll in advanced courses through planning and parent communication. Dr. Zavodjancik said legislation passed in 2021 and the policy was derived from CAFE and Shipman policies.

First Reading of Policy 6172 Gifted and Talented

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said this is a mandated policy which now includes the Arts. Dr. Zavodjancik said the identifying process includes a group PPT where neither students nor parents attend. Parents may also request a separate identification meeting for their child.

First Reading of Policy 5118 Non-Resident School Attendance

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly thanked the Finance Committee for its review and said the regulations offer important clarifications. The existing policy will be provided. Mr. Peterson clarified that yearly Board approval of the tuition amount is not anticipated. Ms. LeBorious said she will correct the amount in the regulations from 30% to 35%. Mr. Cummings said there are two current staff members who are interested in the tuition option; if the policy passes, he requested the June date be waived for them this year.

Adoption of Policies

Adoption of Policy 4118.112 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education adopt Policy 4118.112 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the necessary change is required and wording was provided by Shipman.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Guernsey seconded to amend the policy on page C by deleting “Dr. Zakia Parrish, Executive Director of Operations and Processes” and replacing with “Executive Director of HR” and also changing the email address and phone number listed from “zparrish@fairfield.schools.org” and “203/255-8372” to “titleX@fairfieldschools.org” and “203/255-8462”

Motion Passed: 8-0

Original Motion, as amended, Passed: 8-0

Adoption of Policy 5145.4 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded that the Board of Education adopt Policy 5145.4 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mr. Peterson seconded to amend the policy on page C by deleting “Dr. Zakia Parrish, Executive Director of Operations and Processes” and replacing with “Executive Director of HR” and also changing the email address and phone number listed from “zparrish@fairfield.schools.org” and “203/255-8372” to “titleX@fairfieldschools.org” and “203/255-8462”

Mr. Peterson added that he noted several other policies that have Colleen Deasy’s name inserted and need to be updated.

Motion Passed: 8-0

Original Motion, as amended, Passed: 8-0

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Options for Year- End Expenditures

Ms. LeBoriosis reviewed the summary of options for year-end expenditures that were either cut from next year's budget or are newly identified. Ms. LeBoriosis noted that the approximate \$400K surplus is preliminary and there is a \$100K-\$200K variability.

Ms. LeBoriosis and Ms. Byrnes responded to Board questions:

- Paras use both MS and Google suite products.
- The 100 laptops cover breakage when staff and students return in the fall. If the device fully fails, parents will be held accountable if insurance was not purchased.
- Math texts can still be charged to the general fund and better pricing has been obtained. Mrs. Rotelli and Mr. Peterson felt the texts should remain in the grant. Mrs. Vitale said she was interested in moving the math texts out of the grant to free up funding.
- The uniforms are in addition to what is on the uniform waterfall.
- Monitors and dock stations were cut from the budget by the Superintendent before the budget came to the Board.
- The RLMS and TMS projectors are for the auditoriums and are needed for PDs and assemblies. If not purchased, they will be requested in the next budget.

After discussion, the Board was in general agreement with prioritizing surplus funds for maintenance and security, followed by uniforms.

Ms. LeBoriosis said she will get updated financial information to the Board in a Friday packet. Items are not in the original budget and do not require a budget transfer.

First Reading of School Nutrition and Pricing

Ms. LeBoriosis reviewed the proposal to increase meal pricing, noting that pricing is comparable with other districts and the Whitson's management team agrees with the recommended increases for the 2022-2023 school year. The food services budget is developed differently than the operating budget. The profit/loss statements were reviewed and Whitson's representative Ms. O'Malley said pricing hasn't increased in 5 years and food and fuel costs have increased. In addition, there is a labor shortage which may require an hourly increase incentive for new hires.

[Approval of Minutes](#)

Mrs. Jacobsen moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the May 25 2022 special meeting minutes.

Motion Passed: 7-0-1

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

[Superintendent Report](#)

Grade 4 Advanced Math Students

Mr. Cummings presented an option to address the needs of advanced math students as identified at the end of 3rd grade. Using the existing criteria for Math Academy eligibility, eight new students have been identified for 4th grade advanced math in 2022-2023. This summer, in order to prepare these students to take 5th grade math, supplemental summer learning materials and online support could be provided to cover 4th grade material. During 4th grade, the

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identified students could take 5th grade math in their home schools, by aligning 4th and 5th grade math schedules. A budget decision would be required for 2023-2024, when these students should be taking 6th grade math.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Jacobsen and Ms. Guernsey supported the option of immediately reaching out to parents to determine the interest. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said a promise was made when the Math Academy was pulled; the identified students are at risk of being underserved. Ms. Guernsey said she is also concerned with all the students who have potential, but were not captured.

Mrs. Jacobsen said she would like to see a timeline for the 6th grade piece.

Mrs. Vitale said it may be hard to move forward with the option if only one student takes advantage of the offer. The number of identified students doesn't meet the minimum to run the Math Academy and there may be a significant budget impact.

Ms. Kelly, Mr. Peterson and Ms. Rotelli were not in favor of reaching out to parents with this option. Ms. Kelly said elementary schools should practice leveling similar to the middle schools, and the budget impact for 2023-2024 is a concern; more should be done about the drop in identified students from previous years. Mrs. Rotelli said she believes in differentiation and said the proposal is incomplete.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said differentiation is not possible with these students due to their need to access an entirely different curriculum.

Mrs. Vitale asked Superintendent Cummings to reach out to identified families and determine level of interest.

Grading Regulations

Mr. Cummings said the Policy Committee has been studying the grading policy for more than a year to address inconsistent practices. With the support of the Policy Committee, Head Principals met several times with a group of teachers, which included FEA representation, to identify issues. The guidelines will take effect in August 2022.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the Policy Committee wanted to see the grading administrative regulations before committing to the policy, which is somewhat backwards to how it is normally done. The policy will be crafted next year and administrative regulations may be revisited.

Mr. Cummings said the regulations are an attempt to clarify information for students and parents; consistent reassessment practices will ensure equity.

At 10:52 Mrs. Jacobsen moved, Mrs. Guernsey seconded to extend the meeting to 11:15PM.

Motion Passed: 6-2

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

Oppose: Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Peterson

Enrollment Update

Dr. Parrish reviewed the section changes for the 2022-2023 K-5 enrollment, which does not yet include Open Choice students. The Open Choice students' placements will not impact class section changes. There are 544 enrolled KDG students; last year at the same time there were 588 enrolled KDG students.

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Fundraising report

Ms. LeBorious presented the student activity general ledger and noted that it is a preliminary, unaudited report and is subject to an annual audit. School bookkeepers maintain ledger and bank accounts which includes funds from the yearbook, National Honor Society, Odyssey of the Mind, etc. Ms. LeBorious said she signs off on all checks that go out and while she has fiduciary and audit responsibilities, she does not have oversight of the accounts. A process exists for the district to take over long-dormant accounts, which she plans to look into for several of the older accounts, e.g. Class of 1978.

Mr. Peterson appreciated the report; he never expected to see such a large report for fundraising.

[Committee/Liaison Reports](#)

Mrs. Rotelli reported for SEPTA: The end-of-year wrap up meeting will take place via Zoom tomorrow; Thursday is SEPTA day at the main Library.

Mr. Peterson reported for the Finance Committee: A budget update was received and Policy 3000 was passed to the Policy Committee.

[Open Board Comment](#)

Mrs. Rotelli gave a heartfelt 'thank you' to retiring special education PK teacher, Eileen Fagan.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly congratulated the TMS Odyssey of the Mind Team for finishing in 12th place at the World's Competition.

Mrs. Vitale said she attended several student recognition ceremonies, including Warde's civics classes recognition by the CT Secretary of State. Mrs. Vitale wished everyone a fun final week of school and thanked the teachers for all they have done.

[Adjournment](#)

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

Motion Passed: 8-0

Meeting adjourned at 11:07PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Jessica Gerber

Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary