

**Special Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, August 24, 2022, 7:00 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.

[Call to order of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call](#)

Chairman Christine Vitale called the Special meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present were members Bonnie Rotelli, Jennifer Jacobsen, Carol Guernsey, Jessica Gerber, Christine Vitale, Nick Aysseh, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Jeff Peterson and Crissy Kelly. Also present was Acting Superintendent Steve Tracy and members of the central office leadership team.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Board held a moment of silence in honor of former Warde student Gilberto Rodriguez.

[Discussion and Action on the Election of Superintendent of Schools for Fairfield Public Schools](#)

Mr. Aysseh moved/Mrs. Rotelli seconded the recommended motion “the Board of Education hereby moves, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-157 and all other applicable authority, to elect Michael Testani as the Superintendent of Schools for the term of November 1, 2022, to October 31, 2025, with the terms of the employment of the Superintendent to be set forth in a written contract to be executed by Mr. Testani and the Board.

The Board further delegates to the Chair the authority to execute the final Contract document on behalf of the Board.

Further, the motion and election of the Superintendent is contingent upon Mr. Testani executing the contract document for the said term.”

Mr. Aysseh said he is energized by what Mr. Testani will bring to Fairfield Public Schools. Mr. Testani believes in meeting the needs of every student, knows how to manage a large district and make the most of every dollar to ensure the best value for district investments. Mrs. Rotelli added that Mr. Testani demonstrated a real passion and has a vested interest in Fairfield.

Motion Passed 8-1

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

Mr. Testani thanked the Board and said he is excited and honored and was impressed with the process and the professionalism of the search. Fairfield leadership is strong and he looks forward to working with the Board and district.

The Board agreed by unanimous consent to take a brief recess at 7:10PM, and resumed their meeting at 7:18PM.

Draft

Business Items

Racial Balance Plan

Dr. Tracy said the Racial Balance plan is due to the state on September 8, 2022. Changes to the amendment include a greatly reduced section on the magnet program. It is not possible to implement a magnet program at the onset of redistricting, due in part to logistical challenges and new leadership. Dr. Tracy welcomed additional suggestions.

Mrs. Gerber said the plan should also reflect the redistricting impact to Grades 6-12 and she asked about the timeline for a new waterfall presentation that includes any plans for Dwight. Dr. Tracy said FPS is working with the Town and will present an updated waterfall at the 1st September Board meeting.

Mrs. Vitale said the plan will be submitted as required to the state and excludes intricate details.

Mr. Aysseh said any plans surrounding Dwight will be brought before the full Board. A Dwight renovation could cost \$50M and awareness of all the implications will be essential.

Mrs. Gerber said that if Dwight were to close, capacities at other schools would increase and directly impact redistricting.

Dr. Tracy said he will issue a new invitation to the state board to visit McKinley.

Mrs. Gerber mentioned the importance keeping town officials and state representatives in the loop, given the confirmation from the town attorney on the need to move forward with racial balance. In addition, an outstanding concern is the ambitious timeline combined with a new superintendent.

Mr. Aysseh added that the racial balance plan amendment is in response to the state board. The amendment does not need to be filled in further; the state board is looking for movement and action steps.

Dr. Tracy said the opt-in to McKinley program is not a new commitment and has not resulted in solving the problem. There is no intention of altering or removing this option.

Mrs. Jacobsen asked that the document be consistent with the plural 'plans' and agreed that the impact to Grades 6-12 should also be included in the process.

The Board agreed that consistency of messaging is essential and the public will be kept informed of the details. Mrs. Vitale said redistricting principles will be discussed sometime during the fall.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked for an analysis on whether the opt-in to McKinley program has impacted the numbers. In addition, she asked for an analysis on the financial impact of redistricting including any potential loss of funding. Mrs. Vitale said she didn't want to go too far down the road for financial impact, as there may also be some cost savings. Dr. Tracy added that the intention is to signal to the state that this Board is serious about complying with the law in a short period of time.

Draft

Superintendent Report

Dr. Tracy reported that Convocation was very positive and upbeat; people were happy to be back and there were lots of positive comments.

Ms. Ingram reported that there are currently 11 full-time classroom openings but hopes to have all classrooms filled in time for the first day of school. If a classroom teaching position is not filled by the first day, a substitute will fill in or a current teacher may take on an additional section. There is a challenge with hiring paraeducators; there are 40 current vacancies. Exit interviews revealed that paras are moving to other districts with better pay, and some want a change in part-time or full-time status. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly requested a summary of paraeducator exit interviews.

Dr. Tracy reported on the COVID guidance for 2022-2023 and expected the year will be a time of recovery and progress after 2 years of concern and complications. Covid will be treated like other respiratory illnesses. Dr. Tracy thanked Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Cleary from the Fairfield Health Department for assisting him with the guidance.

Dr. Tracy reported that most 4th graders in the advanced math summer program passed the math test to participate in 5th grade math. Ms. Kelly requested an update on whether the advanced math program resulted in new 5th grade sections.

Mr. Papageorge said a full report on summer projects will be given at the next meeting. Mr. Papageorge reported that there have been a few A/C challenges. The FLHS controls project is stalled due to supply chain issues. The Riverfield roof has been addressed. McKinley units are running fresh air but not cooling; electricians will be dispatched to investigate the problem.

Adjournment

Mr. Aysseh moved/Mr. Peterson seconded that this Special Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

Motion Passed: 9-0

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