



**BOE/CO
Friday Packet
September 8, 2023**

Upcoming Meeting Dates

9-7-2023 Superintendent RI Memo to CSDE

9-7-2023 Memo re Graduation Requirements

9-8-2023 Memo re PK-12 Curricula Update

Invitation: 49th Annual Interfaith Sukkot Luncheon



Upcoming Board of Education Meeting Dates **2023**

September 12	6:00 PM	Special Meeting/Executive Session Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East
	7:30 PM	Regular Meeting CO Board Room 501 Kings Hwy East
September 18	5:00 PM	Policy Committee Meeting Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East
September 20	2:30 PM	Facilities Committee Meeting Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East
September 26	7:30 PM	Regular Meeting CO Board Room 501 Kings Hwy East
October 3	5:00 PM	Policy Committee Meeting Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East
October 4	5:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East



FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Michael J. Testani
Superintendent of Schools

p. 203.255.8371
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September 7, 2023

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
CT Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

Dear Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker,

This is to provide the regular update on Fairfield Public Schools' Racial Imbalance Plan, as requested at the November 2, 2022, State Board of Education meeting. We continue to make progress on the components of our plan as outlined below. There has been significant work to report since my last quarterly report. The SLAM consultants presented 3 possible scenarios for the Fairfield Board of Education to consider on June 13, 2023. We have worked tirelessly since that meeting to engage the public in meaningful discussion. There has been a working group made up of the SLAM consultants and the administration meeting regularly to gather and analyze all the information being collected from staff and the community.

I must once again remind the State Board there are many factors that contribute to the current demographic enrollment at McKinley Elementary School. These include current housing and development, affordability, and the positive climate and culture that students and families experience at McKinley School which was evident during a recent visit by the Commissioner in the spring. I cannot say enough how many communications we have received from McKinley families about the school's climate and culture as being one of the many factors which contributed to them seeking to move into the district specifically to enroll their children at McKinley. Families do not see a racially imbalanced school but rather an inclusive school community where their children are learning, growing, and thriving.

The timeline below is a chronological account of the actions taken to date by the Fairfield Board of Education to begin the process of redistricting:

November 2, 2022: Fairfield Board Finance Committee: Costs/savings estimates from closing an elementary school, as discussed in September.

November 15, 2022: Fairfield Board Discussion of Updated Facilities Planning Principles from 2010

November 29, 2022: Fairfield Board First Reading of Revised Facilities Planning Document

December 13, 2022: Fairfield Board adopts revised Facilities Planning Document. Review of 2019 Charge to Milone and MacBroom (SLAM) and Discussion of Updates, Timeline and Associated Budget

December 15, 2022: Fairfield Board holds Community Conversation regarding racial balance, academic excellence, and facility utilization in person.

December 21, 2022: Board Facilities Committee follow up on seating needs capacity for special programming and ECC, review of November enrollment and capacity data report from SLAM.

January 4, 2023: Fairfield Board held a Facility Planning Workshop. Review of Specialized Programming Request, First Reading of 2023 Board of Education Charge to Consultant, Timeline related to Facilities.

January 5, 2023: Fairfield Board holds Community Conversation regarding racial balance, academic excellence, and facility utilization virtually.

January 10, 2023: Fairfield Board meeting discussion on facilities capital planning, board follow up questions and amendments on the draft charge from January 4th the Board voted to postpone the vote on the charge to the consultant to the January 24, 2023, Board meeting.

January 24, 2023: A Fairfield Board meeting was held where the Board adopted the charge to the consultant to assist in identifying redistricting scenarios to balance elementary school utilization and resolve racial imbalance.

May 24, 2023: The Board participated in the first of a series of training opportunities on equity with facilitators from the Partners for Educational Leadership.

June 13, 2023: Fairfield Board meeting was held to receive a comprehensive presentation on the recommended scenarios from the SLAM consultants.

June 27, 2023: A Fairfield Board meeting was held where supplemental information was presented by the SLAM consultants to the community.

July 20, 2023: A special meeting of the Fairfield Board of Education was held to solicit feedback on the SLAM presentation from the community.

July 25, 2023: A virtual meeting of the Fairfield Board of Education was held to provide another opportunity for input from the community of the redistricting scenarios presented by the SLAM consultants.

August 23, 2023: A special meeting of the Fairfield Board of Education was held to hear a presentation from the SLAM consultants on additional scenarios for the Board of Education to consider based on the feedback received from the public.

August 29, 2023: A Fairfield Board meeting was held to discuss the enormous amount of information gathered by the Board and the administration. It was determined by the Board to set racial imbalance the highest priority in the redistricting process. The Board directed the Superintendent to work with SLAM prioritizing racial imbalance over building utilization and placement of specialized programs.

September 5, 2023: The district held a public community conversation to provide the public another opportunity for input on the redistricting process.

During the summer months, the administration collaborated as part of a working group with SLAM to refine the scenarios to best redistrict the school community. In trying to comply with the racial imbalance law, the district must overcome many challenges in the process. We must consider the increased need for space for specialized programs which serve our students with specialized needs. The district also will need to add additional early childhood classrooms to serve the students who will not be moving onto to kindergarten because of the change in legislation.

Our next update to you will be provided prior to December. The Board has set aside several dates in the coming weeks to come to a final decision and vote prior to a change in membership in the November election. Please feel free to contact with me questions on our progress or any of the details above.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Testani
Superintendent of Schools

*c: Laura Anastasio, CSDE Legal and Government Affairs
Michael McKeon, CSDE Legal and Government Affairs
Fairfield Board of Education*

MT:mb



**FAIRFIELD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

James Zavodjancik, Ed.D.

Chief Academic Officer

Phone: 203-255-8390

FAX: 203-255-8273

To: Mr. Michael Testani, Superintendent of Schools

From: Dr. James Zavodjancik, Chief Academic Officer

Date: September 7, 2023

Re: Graduation Requirements

The Fairfield Public Schools [Policy 6146 – Requirements for Graduation](#) was approved by the Board of Education on August 29, 2023.

The new policy articulates the graduation requirements for the classes of 2024 and 2025, the class of 2026, and the class of 2027 and beyond.

Each graduation class has a variable arts credit within the humanities.

The following chart details the number of students who have **not** met the arts requirement for the classes of 2024 and 2025:

	Fairfield Ludlowe High School	Fairfield Warde High School
Class of 2024	4	2
Class of 2025	6	8



To: Mr. Michael J. Testani, Superintendent
From: Ms. Janine Goss, Executive Director of PK-12 Literacy
Date: September 8, 2023
Re: PK-12 ELA Curricula Update

Considerable progress has been made towards the District Improvement Plan's academic initiative to build vertically aligned, culturally responsive, standards-based PK-12 ELA curricula using a backwards - Understanding by Design (UbD) - model. High school English electives are included in the revision process, as well.

Approximately 90 designers supported the curricula writing process including PK-5 classroom teachers, 6-8 ELA teachers, 9-12 English teachers, English department liaisons, a speech and language pathologist, special education teachers, English learner/multilingual learner teachers, library media specialists, language arts specialists, principals, assistant principals, the ECC director, social studies and science program directors, as well as the ELA 6-12 program director.

We received guidance from Maureen Ruby, Ph.D., from the Department of Educational and Literacy Leadership at Sacred Heart University, as well as from Jay McTighe, one of the developers of the UbD framework, who provided us with practical tools, strategies, and advice for our work. In addition, we have been assigned a coach from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Ms. Devin Fountain, who joined us this summer to support our teams and will continue to support implementation moving forward.

A description of work completed thus far includes the following:

- Articulated PK-12 long-term transfer goals, both transdisciplinary (based on the Vision of a Graduate) and disciplinary (based on the ELA CT Core Anchor Standards), as well as PK-12 essential questions to address alignment across the grades and provide a strong focus for learning outcomes.
- Analyzed ELA Summative and Interim Assessment Block (IAB) data for curricula implications.
- Prioritized standards based on a variety of factors, including Fairfield's need to improve student learning related to particular ELA standards at particular grade level bands.
- Developed curricula documents for each grade level at both the course and unit levels. Documents include course descriptions, course essential questions and enduring understandings, course materials/resources/core texts, as well as unit overviews, unit essential questions and enduring understandings, unit specific resources/texts, prioritized standards for the units, and learning goals that include the content and skills students will know and be able to do by the end of each unit.

- Examined each unit's list of core texts using NYU's Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard for diverse representation of characters and authors, and revised the list of texts, as needed.
- Further revised the drafts in PK-8 to be more explicit in terms of the science, social studies, SEL, and arts' related content students will learn about through their reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and research opportunities.
- Explored HMH's Into Literature (6-8) for potential future BOE approval, but will first share with ELA staff for feedback in September/October.
- Learned how to navigate the hardcopy and digital versions of World of Wonders (PK), HMH's Into Reading (K-5) and Into Literature (6-8) for their organization and components.
- Began the work to increase alignment from grade to grade, especially PK to K, 5th to 6th, and 8th to 9th by identifying expectations for literacy and personal development skills, as well as high-leverage strategies that support literacy achievement. The development of each grade level's "literacy promise" is in draft form and will be revisited in the spring as implementation guides are developed.

Moving forward, the plan is to share the drafts with all teachers throughout the months of September and October during Tuesday department meetings. Then, language arts specialists' meetings and two scheduled curriculum writing days will be used in September for further revisions based on teacher feedback. In October, we will make any final revisions in order to prepare a presentation for the BOE on November 14th for a "first read." We will then look forward to BOE approval at a future BOE meeting, TBA.

Once approved, we plan to use the January 9, 2024 early dismissal department meeting as our kickoff to introduce newly approved ELA curricula to PK-12 teachers. Then, monthly professional learning opportunities are scheduled, as well as opportunities to engage in writing the implementation guides to articulate common formative and summative assessments, as well as the learning plans that include suggested learning experiences to guide lesson planning. PK-12 teachers and leaders will be prepared for a fall 2024 implementation. Finally, ongoing professional learning will continue throughout the 2024-2025 school year and beyond.

The process was an extremely positive one as both vertical and horizontal articulation between grade level designers helped to develop relationships, trust, and collegiality. It was also a good time for Ms. Julie Heller to join the process as our Program Director for ELA 6-12. Julie "hit the ground running" and participated with the secondary teams to provide support and guidance.

Curricula designers were dedicated and hardworking team members striving for excellence and consistency from grade to grade, course to course, and unit to unit. They are, and should be, very proud of their accomplishments.

I am grateful for the support from our BOE, from you, our Superintendent, as well as from the Executive Team, and from our building administrators and school leaders as we all work together to develop and deliver a guaranteed and viable curriculum that will continue to improve student achievement at Fairfield Public Schools.



The Sisterhood of Or Hadash
(Embracing Congregations Beth El and B'nai Torah)
1200 Fairfield Woods Road
Fairfield, CT 06825
[203.374.5544](tel:203.374.5544)/sisterhood@orhadashct.org

Dear Honored Guest:

The Sisterhood of Or Hadash would like to invite you and other religious, civic, and organizational leaders to our 49th Annual Interfaith Sisterhood Sukkot Luncheon with all proceeds benefitting Operation Hope of Fairfield, CT.

Sukkot, you may recall, is a week-long Jewish festival to celebrate both the fall harvest and to commemorate the 40 years in which the Israelites wandered in the desert after being enslaved in Egypt. The luncheon gives us the opportunity to join with our neighbors of different faiths to share our joy and to support Operation Hope's food pantry, housing, community kitchen, and other programs to end hunger and homelessness in our town.

This year's luncheon will be held on **Wednesday, October 4th at Or Hadash**. Join your friends and colleagues for **hors d'oeuvres at 11:15 am** followed by **lunch at 11:45 am**. You may choose from three types of reservations: Standard (\$36), Patron (\$54), Sponsor (\$72).

Our keynote speaker is professor, scholar, and author **Glenn Dynner, PhD**. Dr. Dynner is The Carl and Dorothy Professor of Judaic studies and Director of the Bennett Center at Fairfield University. His speech is entitled "Hassidic Interpretations of Sukkot: Unity During a Fractious Time." See the enclosed flyer for more information about Dr. Dynner and how to make a luncheon reservation. Please share the flyer with your colleagues, staff, and congregants. All are welcome.

Dr. Dynner is the recipient of many prestigious honors including the U.S Fulbright Award, the Guggenheim Fellowship, and the designation of Senior Research Scholar at Yale University Library's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. He was awarded a BA with Honors in Comparative literature from Brandeis University, an MA from McGill University in Jewish Studies, and a PhD from Brandeis University in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.

We look forward to seeing you and your guests at our annual lunch to benefit Operation Hope. Please bring a non-perishable food item and dollars and coins for our **Good Dollars and Cents Project**. They will be given to Operation Hope along with other funds raised.

L'Shalom,

Cindy Burnim and Sara Kershenbaum
Sukkot Luncheon Co-Chairs

The SISTERHOOD of OR HADASH
cordially invites you to our

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SEP - 5 2023

Superintendent's Office
Fairfield Public Schools

49th Annual Interfaith Sukkot Luncheon

To Benefit Operation Hope

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

11:15 am Hors D'oeuvres

11:45 am Luncheon

Or Hadash

(the newly-formed synagogue embracing Congregations Beth El and B'nai Torah)

1200 Fairfield Woods Rd • Fairfield

Featuring Guest Speaker

GLENN DYNNER, PHD

The Carl and Dorothy Bennett Professor
of Judaic Studies and Director of the
Bennett Center at Fairfield University

**"Hassidic Interpretations of Sukkot:
Unity During a Fractious Time"**



An acclaimed scholar, author, editor, public speaker, and more Dr. Dynner will reference the history of complicated Jewish and Christian relations in Poland during the early 1900's. He'll discuss how a leading Hassidic scholar and rabbi strove for harmony among worshippers of different faiths. He'll describe how the rabbi found a message of unity in the holiday of Sukkot not only unity among Jews, but among all peoples. Dr. Dynner's academic focus is Jewish history and religion, the history of Hasidism and the Haskala (enlightenment), and the Holocaust. He is the editor of *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*. Dr. Dynner is the recipient of many prestigious honors including the U.S. Fulbright Award, the Guggenheim Fellowship, and the designation of Senior Research Scholar at Yale University Library's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies.

RSVP no later than Friday, September 29th

Or Hadash must receive your reservation and payment by September 29th

Members of Or Hadash may use their Shul Cloud link for payment

Please make checks payable and mail to: Or Hadash, 1200 Fairfield Woods Road, Fairfield, CT 06825

Name(s) _____

Organization/Title _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please check which type of reservation: ☐ Standard \$36 ☐ Patron \$54 ☐ Sponsor \$72

Check No. _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I am unable to attend, but enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

Please bring a non-perishable food item and dollars and cents for donation to
Operation Hope along with other event proceeds.

Questions? Contact Or Hadash at 203-374-5544 or sisterhood@orhadashct.org

