



**BOE/CO
Friday Packet
December 1, 2023**

Upcoming Meeting Dates

12-1-2023 Superintendent Memo to CSDE re Racial Imbalance Update

12-5-2023 Policy Committee Agenda

10-30-2023 Policy Committee Minutes



Upcoming Board of Education Meeting Dates **2023**

December 5	5:00 PM	Policy Committee Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East
December 6 Wednesday	5:00 PM	Finance Committee Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East
	7:30 PM	BoE Special Meeting CO Board Room 501 Kings Hwy East
December 7 Thursday	7:30 PM	BoE Special Meeting/Town Hall CO Board Room 501 Kings Hwy East
December 12	7:30 PM	BoE Regular Meeting CO Board Room 501 Kings Hwy East
December 13	2:30 PM	Facilities Committee Superintendent Conference Room 501 Kings Hwy East



FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Michael J. Testani
Superintendent of Schools

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December 1, 2023

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

Dear Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to provide an update to the proposed racial imbalance plan submitted by the Fairfield Public Schools and approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education on November 2, 2022. The district has worked tirelessly over the past 12 months to decide on a course of action to address the racial imbalance issue identified at McKinley Elementary School. The Board has considered all options put forth in the plan with a heavy emphasis on creating a redistricting plan for our school district in consultation with the SLAM group. While I understand the spirit of the law, I believe that this redistricting plan is deeply flawed and will have several detrimental effects on our students and their education.

First and foremost, the proposed redistricting would disrupt large numbers of students and their families. This disruption can have a negative impact on their academic performance and overall well-being. Changing schools can be a stressful experience for children, and it can hinder their ability to establish a stable and supportive learning environment.

Our schools are facing utilization issues due to enrollment, specialized program needs and expansion of pre-school offerings. The proposed plan does not offer a clear solution to this problem. Redistributing students without adequate facilities to accommodate them will result in suboptimal learning conditions especially for the student being displaced from McKinley School.

The plan also places further strain on transportation. Students may be required to travel longer distances, leading to extended commutes that can be exhausting and time-consuming. Fairfield, like many districts across Connecticut, is facing challenges with their transportation provider in hiring enough drivers to fulfill the needs of the district. All our redistricting scenarios will cause a net increase in the number of students requiring transportation to and from school.

Lastly, the primary goal of redistricting is to reduce racial imbalance in schools. However, the proposed plan does not significantly address this issue. It is crucial that any redistricting plan achieves meaningful racial balance and diversity in our schools. None of the possibilities brought forth by the SLAM consultants accomplishes this goal.

I urge the State Department of Education to reconsider this redistricting plan and seek alternative solutions that better serve the educational needs of our students. I appreciate your attention to this matter and your commitment to providing the best possible education for our students. I hope that we can work together to find a more effective and equitable solution that considers the well-being and future of our children.

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

**Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

5:00 PM

501 Kings Highway East
Superintendent's Conference Room

To listen via your phone, call 408-418-9388,
and use Meeting Access code: 2347 953 1577

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of October 30, 2023 Policy meeting minutes
- III. Policy
 - a. Vote for Policy Chairperson
 - b. Tentative 2024 Policy Calendar
 - c. 6111 – Student Calendar
 - d. 6146.1AR - Grading
- IV. Future Items
 - a. Purchasing Policy
 - b. Bullying Policy – 5131.911
 - c. Homework Policy - 6154
 - d. School Climate
 - e. Restorative Practices
 - f. Reading – 6142.2
 - g. Bylaws Impact – (Policy 9000)

h. Sustainability Policy

V. Open Discussion/Public Comment

VI. Adjournment

All meetings will be held at 501 Kings Highway East, Superintendent's Conference Room unless otherwise noted.



FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 30, 2023

5:00 PM

501 Kings Highway East
Superintendent's Conference Room

In Attendance:

Ms. Jennifer Jacobsen, Ms. Jennifer Maxon Kennelly, Ms. Carol Guernsey, Dr. Zakia Parrish, Dr. James Zavodjancik (left at 5:27pm), Mr. Robert Mancusi (left at 5:35pm), Dr. Jeannette Faber (FEA Representative), Ms. Kristen Hardiman

Call to Order: Ms. Maxon Kennelly called the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

Approval of October 16, 2023 Policy Committee meeting minutes: Approved with changes by a 3-0 vote.

Policy:

6146 – Requirements for Graduation

Dr. Zavodjancik explained this policy is being brought back to the committee to make a grammatical edit. Dr. Zavodjancik stated he corrected the double use of the word “Technology” and replaced it with the word “Mathematics” in Section I, “Credit Requirements for Graduation”.

The committee approved the recommended changes by a 3-0 vote. This policy will be presented to the Board on November 14th for a “one and done approval”.

5111 – Admission

Dr. Zavodjancik stated guidance for this policy came from the State; however, they did not provide an assessment. Dr. Zavodjancik explained the State would like each district to develop their own assessment. Ms. Jacobsen explained the State provided only guidelines for the assessment. Dr. Zavodjancik stated CES is working collaboratively with a small group to develop an assessment for districts to use as a template.

Ms. Maxon Kennelly asked Dr. Zavodjancik if there is any material the district can provide to parents regarding the timeline for September of 2025. Dr. Zavodjancik stated the district should be able to provide information to parents by the end of this school year.

Ms. Jacobsen questioned the letter that parents have to submit as the assessment that their child is ready for kindergarten for September of 2024. Ms. Guernsey asked if there is something in addition to the letter that the parent has to submit to the district. Dr. Zavodjancik stated the district has to accept only the letter. Ms. Maxon Kennelly asked if there is a form that is given to the parents to sign attesting to the readiness of their child. Dr. Zavodjancik acknowledged there is currently a form which parents complete with the registration office attesting to their child's readiness for kindergarten. Ms. Guernsey suggested giving parents a list of expectations of a kindergarten student for parents to use as a guideline. Dr. Zavodjancik stated there are developmental guidelines which pre-schools use and he can include them in the form which parents complete.

Ms. Jacobsen stated her concern with this new legislation is that it will widen our age gap instead of closing it which was the intention of the law. Ms. Jacobsen further explained that kindergarten teachers are going to have a bigger age gap with their students. Ms. Maxon Kennelly added she does not see that happening next school year; however, it may happen the following year.

This policy was approved by a 3-0 vote and will be presented to the Board at the November 28th meeting for a "first read".

6163.33 Therapy Dogs

Mr. Mancusi stated he made edits to this policy based on feedback from the previous Policy Committee meeting.

Ms. Guernsey questioned the language on Page 17, bullet "I". Ms. Maxon Kennelly stated she is comfortable with that item since the language in the bullet point is explicit. Mr. Mancusi assured Ms. Guernsey therapy dogs would not enter the building without parents being notified ahead of time.

This policy was approved by a 2-1 vote. Ms. Maxon Kennelly and Ms. Jacobsen voted in favor. Ms. Guernsey was opposed. This policy will be presented to the Board at the November 14th meeting for a "first read".

5141.5 – Suicide Prevention

Mr. Mancusi stated he made edits to this policy based on feedback from the previous Policy Committee meeting.

This policy was approved by a 3-0 vote and will be presented to the Board at the November 28th meeting for a "first read".

6111 – Student Calendar

Dr. Parrish stated she spoke with Superintendent Testani about the student calendar, and he is still interested in following the CES calendar. Dr. Parrish also stated the Superintendent is considering some half-day professional development days since the Tuesday meetings are just not sufficient.

Ms. Jacobsen recommended the regulations state that the district follows the CES calendar, and that graduation will not be held on a Friday. Ms. Guernsey recommended adding language which pertains to parent conferences at all levels. Ms. Jacobsen acknowledged that the district is required to have parent conferences twice per year at all levels. Ms. Guernsey stated conferences are currently “offered” but you have to “request” a conference at some levels.

Ms. Jacobsen stated she will revise this policy for the next Policy Committee meeting scheduled for December 5th.

Open Discussion/Public Comment:

Dr. Jeannette Faber – FEA Representative, English teacher at Fairfield Warde High School

Dr. Faber spoke regarding the reassessment guidelines. Dr. Faber stated as an English teacher she has not had any issues with the reassessment piece. Dr. Faber stated she will speak with Mr. McGarry, FEA President, about a possible survey with staff on the reassessment guidelines to provide feedback to the committee.

Ms. Maxon Kennelly stated there is a minor edit needed to policy 5144.4 Recess and Play-Based Learning which was presented to the Board at the last meeting for a “first read”. Ms. Maxon Kennelly stated she will recommend an edit at the table when this policy is voted on at the next Board meeting.

Adjournment: Ms. Maxon Kennelly adjourned the meeting at 6:17pm.