

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, November 22, 2011

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APPROVED

Minutes of the Regular/Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, November 22, 2011, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Vice Chairman Ms. Pamela Iacono called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:05 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Sue Brand, Mr. John Convertito, Mr. Philip Dwyer, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Jessica Gerber, Mr. Perry Liu, Mrs. Jennifer Maxon Kennelly and Mr. Tim Kery (arrived 7:10 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Rep Sara Wiant, Fairfield Warde High School Student Rep Stephanie Teixeira and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 70 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Ms. Iacono led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Presentation by Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor-
Dr. Title introduced Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor who is visiting school districts around the state to hear what they think the state is doing well and what it is not doing well. He will give a brief presentation and then there will be an opportunity for Board members to comment on the issues facing Fairfield and to ask questions and comment about education in the state.

Commissioner Pryor stated that it is important to him that high performing districts continue to receive the right kind of attention. His department is interested in hearing about regulatory barriers and anything that serves as a hindrance where the state may be able to clear the way. He commented on the NAEP data that recently came out on the performance of students in 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics in all 50 states. Connecticut continues to have the largest achievement gap. In 8th grade mathematics Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Dakota, South Dakota and Texas beat Connecticut because they are gaining at a better rate and Connecticut is flat. Fairfield's efforts to date have proven that it is possible to attain high levels of performance; let's take it to another level and aspire to be number one. He asked how he can help the State Department get out of the way and focus their attention on the right things to help Fairfield achieve that goal.

Board comments, questions and suggestions followed regarding a five year plan to help move us forward, evaluating teachers in terms of the strategies they use and an emphasis on professional development to achieve a good teacher, mechanisms to help measure teacher effectiveness, emphasizing a well-rounded education for every child and not just in the tested areas, will the state impede Fairfield in maintaining our high achieving ability going further, recent Race to the Top provisions that the federal government promoted, the NAEP results and what the states that beat Connecticut are doing that we are not, more policy requirements being put on districts and does it really help us move forward when it comes to improving school climate or school performance, state certification regulations that are often barriers to bring in talent from out of state, would like to see healthy foods in schools, concern about the burden of proof and the amount of disparity that needs to be addressed and how we evaluate the end result when looking at our students as graduate.

State Representative Brenda Kupchick commented on the ECS funding. She stated that census data being used is from 2000 and some of the towns had prison populations and university students counted in so they are getting extra money based on numbers that are not accurate. Fairfield puts up a lot of its own money to pay for our school system and gets very little from the state. She thinks the bigger cities like Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport need to put more in; they get mostly all of their education dollars from the state and need to have a little more accountability.

4. BREAK – 5 Minutes
5. Convene to Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education

A. Election of Temporary Chairman/Secretary

Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that in accordance with the By-Laws, Superintendent Dr. David Title will serve as Temporary Chairman/Secretary during the election of Board Officers.

Motion carried unanimously: 9:0:0.

B. Election of Board Officers

1. Mr. Fattibene nominated Ms. Pamela Iacono as Board of Education Chairman.

Mrs. Maxon Kennelly nominated Mr. Philip Dwyer as the Board of Education Chairman.

Vote for Ms. Iacono as Board of Education Chairman: 5 votes in favor (Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Convertito and Ms. Iacono).

Vote for Mr. Dwyer as Board of Education Chairman: 4 votes in favor (Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand, Mrs. Maxon Kennelly and Mr. Dwyer).

Ms. Iacono was elected Chairman of the Board of Education.

Mr. Dwyer asked that the Board pass a motion that says that the Board elects Pamela Iacono Chairman by unanimous vote, and he would like to put that motion forward.

Dr. Title stated that according to the agenda the Board has to move to the next item. However, during the regular meeting an item can be added to the agenda by two-thirds vote.

2. Mrs. Gerber nominated Mr. Philip Dwyer as Board of Education Vice Chairman.

Vote for Mr. Dwyer as Board of Education Vice Chairman: 9:0:0.

Mr. Dwyer was elected Vice Chairman of the Board of Education.

3. Mr. Kery nominated Mrs. Jessica Gerber as Board of Education Secretary.

Mrs. Brand nominated Mrs. Jennifer Maxon Kennelly as Board of Education Secretary.

Vote for Mrs. Gerber as Board of Education Secretary: 5 votes in favor (Mr. Kery, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Iacono, Mr. Convertito and Mrs. Gerber).

Vote for Mrs. Maxon Kennelly as Board of Education Secretary: 4 votes in favor (Mrs. Brand, Mr. Liu, Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Maxon Kennelly).

Mrs. Gerber was elected Secretary of the Board of Education.

Ms. Iacono took the Chair.

Ms. Iacono took a Moment of Personal Privilege and thanked the Board members for this honor and stated that she really wants this Board to work together for the 10,000 students that we serve in cooperation with Central Office Administration and the other Town bodies.

C. Review of By-Laws

Ms. Iacono stated that the Board will discuss the By-Laws, make suggested changes and recommendations, and they will be voted on at the Special Meeting scheduled for December 1st.

The following proposed By-Law changes were suggested:

Article II – Organization & Officers

Section 4 – Committees

A. Standing Committees

Delete #2 – Facilities, Information Technology & Long-Range Planning

Delete #3 – Finance, Budget & Community Relations

A Board of Finance Liaison and an FEA Liaison be added into the Bylaws

Article IV – Methods of Operation

Section 1 – Formulation of Policies

A. The Board policies shall be reviewed periodically and revised as needed. In order to insure compliance with current legislation and regulations, the Board shall contract with CABE for a full review of all policies and administrative regulations at least once every five years.

Delete words “with CABE”

Article IV – Methods of Operation

Section 4 – Board Evaluation

The Board of Education shall annually undertake a self-evaluation of its policies, practices, and internal operating procedures in order to provide the best possible services to the community and the School District at a Special Meeting in May prior to the Superintendent’s Evaluation.

It was suggested that this date be made more general or another month instead of May since the months leading up to the adoption of the budget may cause the Board to not put as much effort into this as they should.

Suggested wording of “no later than May and no sooner than January”

Mr. Dwyer suggested limiting the Minutes to capturing the final action and some points in summary form of what caused the vote to go the way it did.

Board comments followed on recording of the Board Minutes. Mrs. Brand asked how long the audio or video tapes of the meetings are kept and if the written form ultimately the only record of the meeting. Dr. Title will check on this.

Ms. Iacono commented that she does not know if CABE has liaisons anymore and perhaps there only needs to be a liaison to the CABE Delegate Assembly. She will check on this.

Mrs. Brand suggested having someone report to the Board on a regular basis about what is going on in the legislature and if there are going to be any votes from the State Board of Ed since it has a huge impact on us.

D. Discussion of Board Assignments

Ms. Iacono asked Board members to get back to her with their preferences by December 2nd.

6. Convene to Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

7. Presentation

A. Presentation of Music Curriculum, Grades K-5

Mrs. Donna Schmardel, K-12 Music Coordinator, stated that this is a curriculum revision, and she briefly explained the process that was taken. The elementary music staff was asked to review the current curriculum for what they found over the years needs clarification, modification or an overhaul. Those thoughts were then brought to the revision team for review and discussion. There were three separate curriculum committees: band, orchestra and general music. Once the curriculum was revised, the documents were made available to the music staff for review, comments and suggestions; and some adjustments were made. A parent focus group met on October 26, there was a presentation and discussion at the Board's Curriculum, Policy & Special Programs Subcommittee on November 2, and on November 15 a presentation was given to the Curriculum Council of Administrators and Curriculum Leaders. The general music curriculum was made clear by identifying specific strategies, objectives were reworded and assessments continue to be refined. The instrumental curriculum was revised to be more comprehensive by better identifying objectives, developing focus questions, developing and implementing assessments and including resources within the document. She gave a brief power point presentation of the overall music curriculum K-12.

Board comments and questions followed regarding the areas that needed revision and how they are being addressed in the new curriculum, any additional costs associated with the new curriculum, any thoughts on how to change the delivery system or to better it at the elementary schools, and why there can't be more explicit connections made to the history and culture component of the curriculum.

8. Approval of Minutes

- A. Mr. Kery moved seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 11, 2011.

Motion carried: 5:0:4. Ms. Iacono, Mr. Liu, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery and Mr. Brand voted in favor. Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Maxon Kennelly abstained.

- B. Mr. Kery moved seconded by Mrs. Maxon Kennelly that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of November 4, 2011.

Motion carried: 3:0:6. Mr. Kery, Ms. Iacono and Mr. Fattibene voted in favor. Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Maxon Kennelly abstained.

9 Student/Committee/Liaison Reports

- ◆ Sara Wiant reported that the first marking period just ended. The Homecoming football game and dance were both a huge success. There was recently a cyber-bullying and internet safety program, a freshmen forum was held and World Aids Day will be next week. Tryouts for winter sports are taking place, the fall play, *It's a Wonderful Life*, will be held on December 2nd, students are getting ready for the Candlelight Concert, and alumni will be visiting tomorrow.
- ◆ Stephanie Teixeira reported that report cards were distributed on Friday. The Ludlowe vs. Warde Thanksgiving football game will be held at Ludlowe at 10 a.m. The winter sports season begins on December 7 and tryouts start next week. The fall production, *Flowers for Allegron*, was held this past weekend. The music department is preparing for the Carillon Concert on December 15. Former Warde students will also be returning tomorrow to talk to juniors and seniors about their college experience. Two Navy Seals spoke to history classes for Veterans Day. Trends, the boutique run by the fashion merchandising class, will open on December 8 for holiday shopping.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand gave a brief history and explained the services provided by CES (Cooperative Educational Services) which covers all of Fairfield County. CES approved their calendar, the bullying policy was reviewed and they adopted the changes which included the sexual harassment piece. There was a presentation of their audit, which had no recommendations, except a concern with the economy relative to funds, where they are kept and whether they are insured and protected. CES is hosting a Legislative Breakfast for Superintendents and Board Chairs on December 15. The Burden of Proof was postponed by the State Board of Ed. Six to Six gave a

presentation to the Board on the SWIS school-wide information systems) program they developed. They looked at disciplinary reporting, issues and trends and then compared that to their test scores to see if there was a correlation. Students who are performing very well on tests scores were the ones they were seeing with more disciplinary issues. They modified their schedule to decrease the number of transition times and ended up having less disciplinary problems. When reporting CMT scores, they changed to a vertical representation and are getting a better sense of the student progress over time. It showed that math/science needed to be addressed, and they were able to translate that into an action with their school improvement plan. There was a budget report and a facility update. The Board of Health is working on the immunizations and how they will coordinate that within the school district. .

- ◆ Mr. Fattibene reported that the Transportation Safety Advisory Committee had one referral related to the relocation of a bus stop by a parent who had two students attending two different middle schools because of the recent redistricting and grandfathering. Each bus stop was at a different location which made it difficult for the parent. Mr. Fattibene rendered his decision and believes it was disposed of. Mrs. Maxon Kennelly asked what the policy is on this with regard to how the request for a change of bus stop is handled.
- ◆ Ms. Iacono – No report.
- ◆ Mr. Kery – No report.
- ◆ Mr. Liu – No report.

10. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Title commented that the district is beginning to engage in Instructional Rounds. A guided practice training session was held at Warde High School. Forty-eight visitors spread out to 32 different classrooms, took data, came together, and debriefed. There was a lot of outstanding instruction and good dialog with teachers and administrators talking together about what they saw in classrooms in a non-judgmental way. Between now and the end of the school year every school will participate in at least one of these, not with the entire administrative team but with some outside folks from within the district and teachers from within the building. Dr. Title reported that he gave a workshop at the CAFE Convention about the operational audit Fairfield conducted. It was an opportunity to share our experiences with the rest of the state. The session was well attended.

Mrs. Maxon Kennelly asked if there is anything in place for staff to talk with the alumni who will be visiting tomorrow about how they are feeling in terms of their preparation for college? Dr. Title will check with the high school on this.

Mrs. Brand asked if the Board will have a chance to go through the CMT results and what the school improvement plans will be to address them. Dr. Title stated that the school improvement planning process is a major initiative this year. It is being completely revamped from K-12 and part of the process is for each school to analyze its own data, looking at celebrations and challenges, and what their game plan is for the next 18 months to address those. They will be shared with the Board when they are finalized in January/February.

11. Old Business

- A. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu that the Board of Education approve Policy #4220 – Smoking by School Employees.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- B. Mr. Dwyer moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber that the Board of Education approve Policy #5314 – Smoking (Students).

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- C. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that the Board of Education approve Policy #5330 – Bullying.

Mrs. Brand encouraged the Board to support this policy.

Board comments and questions followed.

Public Comment

J Alfred Dunn asked what happens when a child is accused of bullying, there is proof and the parents refuse to accept that their child did it. What is the Board going to do then, and does the Board have enough capital to confront the guilty parties?

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

12. New Business

- A. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber that the Board of Education approve the Educational Specifications for Riverfield Elementary School Extension/Alterations.

Dr. Title stated that this is the number one project in the Board's Facilities Plan, and the Board requested the First Selectman to form a building committee. At the Board of Selectmen's meeting one of the requests made of the administration was to bring back the educational specifications for the project. In an effort to have a better idea on what the project might look like and what the range of cost for the project might be without getting into a lot of detail, an architect was engaged to do some very beginning conceptual design work.

Mr. Cullen stated that the educational specifications are the start of a project. It also is the most important piece needed to send to the State Department of Education Bureau of School Facilities to start the reimbursement process.

Architect Phil Cerrone gave a brief overview of the project. He stated that currently the capacity of the school is 399 students and there are five portable classrooms. One of the objectives is to get rid of the portable classrooms, incorporate those into permanent classroom space and improve the core facilities. The kitchen is undersized, there is only one serving line, and the multi-purpose room, which doubles as the cafeteria, is also undersized. One of the ideas is to take the stage out of the cafeteria, build a new stage in the back of the gym to make that more of the multi-purpose area and it will give more space in the cafeteria without incurring the cost of additional square footage inside the cafeteria space. The objective was not to design the project but to come up with some sort of schematic of the number of square feet need to be added to the foot print, which is believed to be about an additional 10,000 or 11,000 square feet. Once we came up with that schematic, a construction budget was put together on not only the cost of doing the addition but the cost of upgrading the rest of the facility that needs to be upgraded. The two biggest things that were incorporated in addition to the upgrades were the addition of a fire sprinkler system and air conditioning and ventilation to improve all the ventilation in the facility. Lastly parking area was looked at. The options are to expand toward the pod area or expand towards the back of the building. He briefly described the differences between the two schematics. The cost estimates are approximately the same for both scenarios. He encouraged the Board not to focus on the design but on the concept of the need for upgrading the core facility and the need for an additional 11,000 square feet.

Board questions and comments followed regarding the ed specs.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mrs. Maxon Kennelly to postpone a decision on this until the next Board meeting, December 13.

Board discussion followed on the amendment.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

B. Presentation of Draft 2012-2013 Student Calendar

Dr. Title stated that this calendar mirrors the CES calendar and there are no substantive changes to it from previous years. There are some slight modifications on the elementary school conferences in October. There is still the same number, they have just been moved around slightly. It is basically the existing calendar carried forward to next year.

Board questions and comments followed regarding considering not having a February and April vacation but having one in March, holding school on November 12 since the actual commemoration of Veterans' Day events will take place on Sunday, November 11, placement of January 18 for professional development and moving it to after mid-term exams, eliminating February break and shortening the school year and starting school on Wednesday rather than Thursday and then the first four cancellation days would extend the school year rather than going into the April break.

13. Public Comments and Petitions

Ellen Kuroghlian, Old Spring Road, commented that space for the music program is an issue. There has not consistently been a dedicated music room in every building. She asked the Board to consider that very carefully when approving the music curriculum. The 2000 curriculum did have a declarative statement giving the specifications needed for space requirements.

Neal Fink, Crest Terrace, commented on the ed specs for Riverfield and that it should be defined in the ed specs whether the stage is in the APR or the gym. He encouraged the Board to work closely with the Town and to put as many specifics as possible in the ed specs about the roof.

Amy Crawford, Riverfield PTA President along with parents standing in support of her statement, asked for the Board's continued support with respect to the building project for Riverfield. She thanked the Board for their support of the Riverfield renovations and has confidence that prioritizing the project is fair, necessary, reasonable and equitable.

14. Open Board Comment

Mr. Liu commented on the advantages of presenting an item at one meeting and voting on it at the next meeting and stated that it is something that he would like to respectfully request.

15. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 10:40 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Jessica Gerber
Secretary