

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, May 8, 2012

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, May 8, 2012, at Fairfield Ludlowe High School – Auditorium, 785 Unquowa Road.

1. Chairman Ms. Pamela Iacono called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:42 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Sue Brand, Mr. John Convertito, Mr. Philip Dwyer, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Jessica Gerber, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu and Mrs. Jennifer Maxon Kennelly. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Representative Sara Wiant and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 35 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Ms. Iacono led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Presentation
 - A. Presentation of Technology Education Curriculum, Grades 7-12

Mr. Kris Samuelson, Liaison for Technology Education and a teacher at Fairfield Ludlowe High School, recognized and thanked the 12 other teachers in the Tech Ed program. Students in this program are working with real tools, real machines and computers with professional level software. Grade 7 is an exploratory curriculum and grade 8 students are allowed to choose three electives. At the high school level there are six areas with multi-levels mixed into the classes: computer aided design, graphic communication, construction and manufacturing, transportation technology, computer technology and robotics/engineering. There are objectives, essential questions, assessments and standards. He briefly described each of the six areas and showed examples of high school student work in each of the program areas offered. He also gave examples of where things cross over the curriculum; students take the knowledge they have learned in other classes, apply it and come out with a product. Students develop 21st century skills and are given the opportunity to make choices for careers or for paths that will take them to that next step. This is a standards-based curriculum and meets the needs of all students.

Board questions and comments followed.

Mrs. Kennelly asked if students at the Alternative High School have access to this curriculum. Ms. Leonardi replied that if students have an interest, we try to work with whichever high school they are assigned to so they can go back to that school to take the courses.

Mr. Convertito asked if there are equities between the programs. Dr. Rosato stated that the programs are virtually identical across both of the high schools and the three middle schools.

Mr. Convertito stated that he would like to see a wish list, anticipating equipment needs 3, 4, 5 years down.

Mr. Liu asked for an explanation of how the curriculum was built. Mr. Samuelson replied that all 13 teachers convened together and then the middle school and high school subsequently split off. An inventory was taken of where we currently were; some programs had already changed internally without formally adopting new documents because technology does not stand still and avenues had to be created for that new technology to be in place and not leave our students behind. These documents have been worked on for the last two years. We have referenced whatever standards were available that we could find. We also researched best practices in the industry and reviewed National Standards. The program was reviewed by the Curriculum Coordinating Council and a Parent Focus Group was held.

Mr. Liu asked if for the next meeting some literature could be provided on what those standards are, especially the State and Industry Standards.

Mr. Liu asked about the Curriculum Coordinating Council and the Parent Focus Group that was held. Dr. Rosato stated that he leads the Curriculum Coordinating Council which is made up of the program leaders, Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard and Mrs. Parks. Mr. Samuelson presented the curriculum as well as the documents to the Council and feedback was provided to him. The Parent Focus Group was held last week. It was not well attended, three parents.

Mr. Dwyer asked if there has been a growth of students wanting to take these electives. Mr. Samuelson stated that in the last two years there has been a growth in students wanting to enroll in the program. Mr. Dwyer asked if there are benchmarks to rank our Tech Ed Program. Mr. Samuelson stated that there is a State Vocational Assessment exam, and last year we were in the top third.

Mr. Convertito asked at what point a student is referred to a vocational tech school. Mr. Samuelson responded that we are not really building the trade level skill in these students. Vocational schools require students to enter in 9th grade. Mr. Convertito asked if there would be any indicators between 7th and 8th grade that would help us to guide a student. Mr. Samuelson replied that there may be, but he has not pursued that.

4. Approval of Minutes

- A. Mr. Convertito moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 10, 2012.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

5. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports

- ◆ Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Representative Sara Wiant reported that AP testing is taking place this week and next. Honor societies are holding their inductions and graduation ceremonies. Senior internships start the week after next. Beauty and the Beast was two weekends ago, and it was very successful and fun for everyone involved. Student productions are next Thursday; they are productions that students write, direct and cast.
- ◆ Other committee/liaison reports will be sent in the Friday Packet.

6. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Title stated that he will get a summary of what has happened at the legislature with the education bill and send it to the Board within the next week.

7. Old Business

- A. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that the Board of Education approve Policy #5119 – Student Discipline.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that the Student Discipline Policy has into two parts; pages 1-10 involves the definition of suspension, in-school and out-of-school, and gets us in line with the State, and pages 11-21 involves the use of a hearing officer for all expulsion hearings. She stated that it is the opinion of the Policy Committee that the Board approve this policy with the hearing officer.

Mr. Liu stated that since the Board will not be actively involved in hearing expulsions, he wants to be sure the Board is notified if there is a large number of expulsions and wonders if a summary once a year is not enough. Mr. Convertito stated that the Committee discussed putting in a threshold but was concerned with protecting privileged student information. It was concluded that a report must be provided at least once a year, but any Board member at any point in time can request that report through the Superintendent's Office.

Mr. Fattibene moved, seconded by Mrs. Kennelly to amend page 21, Section D to read: "At least once every year, no later than May 1st, the Superintendent shall, in Executive Session, provide the Board with a summary of any recommendation of expulsion and any expulsion hearings. The summary shall include conduct alleged by the administration, the findings of the hearing officer and the length and conditions of expulsion imposed, if any."

Board discussion followed on the amendment.

Ms. Iacono asked if this is legally allowable. Mr. Fattibene stated that he spoke with Attorney Houston and believe it is. Attorney Houston did not do an official opinion; he said that he would look into it and get back to Mr. Fattibene but has not yet done so.

Ms. Iacono asked procedurally if the Board is so inclined to approve this policy in its entirety if the person making the amendment would be amenable to withdrawing it until a legal opinion is obtained on just the amendment. Mr. Fattibene stated that he does not see the urgency and thinks it would be better to table this to the next meeting versus passing a policy that may be modified within a short period of time.

Mrs. Brand suggested that this might be rectified in Regs as opposed to specifically written in policy.

Vote on amendment carried: 6:3:0. Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Liu and Mrs. Brand voted in favor. Mr. Kery, Mr. Dwyer and Ms. Iacono voted in opposition.

Vote on main motion as amended carried: 9:0:0.

B. Discussion of Fairfield Public Schools Food Service Program

Mrs. Joann Fitzpatrick, Manager of Food & Nutrition Services, addressed the concern with pink slime in beef products, which is the processing of lean finely textured beef. It is approved by the USDA, and is not required to be labeled on products. Pink slime came to light in February when the media attention first hit. After doing some research, Fairfield decided that beginning in April beef products would not be served for the rest of the school year and our menus have been adjusted. Mrs. Fitzpatrick reviewed the Healthy Food Certification program run by the State of Connecticut. School districts participating in the National School Lunch Program are required to vote annually on whether they will participate in the program. Districts participating must follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards for all food sold to students from all sources: vending machines, school cafeterias, school stores, fundraising activities on school premises and any other source of food sales. Districts that choose to participate in the program receive 10 cents per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches served. This is Fairfield's third year participating, and it is working pretty well. About 70 percent of the schools in the state participate in this program.

Mrs. Brand asked what marketing strategies are being used to promote healthy food. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that we have signed on to Fuel for Learning's Veggie Pledge featuring a vegetable of the month, posters were put up in the cafeterias with fun vegetable facts and nutrition information, we participated in the Iron Chef Contest and the Food Expo sponsored by Fuel for Learning.

Mr. Liu suggested that every year when the Board sees the Food Service budget it might be a good time to see a set of goals showing what has been accomplished within the year and what is planned for the next year; and the Board could give input on ideas that we would like to see.

Mr. Liu asked if he could get 2/3 of the Board to add a motion to the agenda to have Food Service provide yearly goals. Ms. Iacono stated that the Board reviews the Food Service budget every

year in June and asked for a friendly sense of the body that at that time the Food Service group will present their goals and what they have achieved during the year. Mr. Liu stated that the Board should be allowed to have input on issues that concern them. Mr. Convertito stated that the issue of goal setting will be addressed later on the agenda through the Board Handbook.

Mr. Liu asked if we have any composite chicken nuggets. Mrs. Fitzpatrick responded that there is and we are transitioning out of that. Mr. Liu stated that as a goal it would be great not to see those next year.

Mr. Convertito commented on the Culinary Arts Program at Fairfield Ludlowe High School. In talking with the students, a lot of their frustration is that they are not allowed to submit recipes for the school's menu. It would be a great avenue for students to have ownership of the nutrition program and he asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick to investigate that.

Discussion followed on organizations at the high school selling food during the day in order to fundraise. Mrs. Fitzpatrick stated that it is restricted because of the Healthy Food Certification.

8. New Business

A. Discussion of Naming the North Stratfield Elementary School Fifth Grade Wing

Mrs. Debbie Jackson, North Stratfield School Principal, asked for the Board's support in allowing the fifth grade graduating class the opportunity to name the fifth grade wing at North Stratfield School in honor of Nancy Hanlon. Mrs. Hanlon passed away unexpectedly last April. She was a teacher in Fairfield for 18 years and was at North Stratfield School for her last three years. She was a passionate educator who did everything possible to meet the needs of her students, which even included tutoring many of them over the summer at no cost to their families. She truly left her mark on the entire North Stratfield community and hundreds of students during her entire tenure in Fairfield.

Breda O'Sullivan, third grade teacher at North Stratfield School and speaking on behalf of all of the teachers at North Stratfield School, stated that Nancy Hanlon was an exceptional person, one of those people who made you wish you could be more like her.

B. Discussion of Naming the Stratfield Elementary School Library/Media Center

Dr. Title stated that Board members received information on this in Enclosure No. 5.

C. First Read of Policy #3901 – Naming of Facility

Mrs. Kennelly stated that the Policy Committee voted to move this forward with the suggested changes in red but is open to input from the Board.

Board comments followed.

Mr. Convertito stated that he hopes the order of the agenda for the next meeting will have the two voting items that the Board just heard precede the approval of this policy because those items were submitted under the old policy. Ms. Iacono stated that they will be on the agenda in the order they were taken up this evening.

Mrs. Brand recommended that each school or somewhere else keep a record.

Mr. Dwyer asked if there will be administrative regulations. Dr. Title responded that some regulations might be needed. For example, developing a form so if someone asks what to do to name something, there is a form and a process. Something could also be included about keeping track.

D. Discussion of Educational Technology Plan, July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015

Dr. Title stated that this plan requires Board approval, which is a condition of receiving federal funds for technology. Mrs. Parks and Ms. Byrnes have worked on this.

Mrs. Parks explained that this plan is in a format that is prepared by the State of Connecticut and is developed around the National Technology Education Standards and the State Standards which reflect the National Standards. It is a three-year plan that requires Board approval and needs to be submitted to the State. Without this we can't get the E-Rate funding. The plan assesses and describes the Fairfield Public Schools current technology status in five areas: curriculum integration, professional development, infrastructure and telecommunications, administrative needs and equitable use of technology. Basically, there are five technology education goals and the plan is written based on those goals. The committee had a broad representation across the district: parents, students, central office administrators, building administrators, curriculum leaders, teachers, library media specialists and instructional technology staff.

Board questions followed.

Mrs. Kennelly asked if any of the goals or standards are changing. Ms. Byrnes replied that they are all modified a little.

Mr. Convertito asked if this plan has improved over the last three years. Mrs. Parks replied that there are some improvements over the previous plan. Ms. Byrnes stated that we are trying to embed the use of technology in all of our curriculum.

Mr. Convertito commented on page 15, Students (elementary), and asked what the numerous before and after school programs are. Ms. Byrnes replied that they vary from school to school, some are homework programs, programs run by teachers, and they are all documented by the principals.

Mr. Convertito questioned page 16, Students (high school), that states the library media center is available to students after school. Ms. Byrnes replied that it is available after school; it is not available as liberally as it was, it is available two days a week instead of four.

Mrs. Gerber commented on the instructional leader for technology position on page 21 and asked if it is something that is going to be in next year's budget. Dr. Title replied that we presently have an individual who serves a dual purpose; the curriculum leader for social studies and the curriculum leader for technology. The Operational Audit suggested we split those and create separate positions because we have full-time curriculum leaders in the content areas and there should be someone overseeing technology on the instructional side. It is a goal that he would like to pursue and that is why it is in here.

Mr. Kery asked if there is some type of formalized assessment process to know where our teachers are with technology. Mrs. Parks stated that other than surveying the teachers and the everyday software that is used, there is no assessment tool. The idea of a rubric has been discussed but we just aren't there yet.

Mr. Kery asked why we are looking at data plans when we have a wireless network infrastructure and soon will have a wireless infrastructure on all of our campuses. Ms. Byrnes stated that this is in support of 24/7 learning. We have about 25 tablets for each high school and two English teachers who will be our trailblazers. A contract was negotiated with Verizon who has a number of other pilots that have recently launched in the State. The teachers will select apps that will be downloaded to the devices and some of Verizon's tools will be used to allow us to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act. If we can convert our curriculum to on-line resources and give one of these to each student, it will cost about \$2,500 for the four years the student has that

device. Looking at the cost of textbooks and other materials and the loss and replacement cost, you get that \$2,500 back in a breakeven pretty quickly.

Mr. Kery stated that he does not see distance learning in the plan and asked that this type of resource be incorporated in future plans. Mrs. Brand commented on being mindful of the age of students for online courses.

Mrs. Brand commented on having parameters, protecting our students and guidelines for staff, students and parents. She asked when a policy like that might be ready. Mrs. Parks stated that she is working on the Acceptable Use Guidelines for Staff and Students and wants to have it finished before the end of the year.

E. Discussion of Board of Education Handbook

Ms. Iacono stated that the Board sent this to the Policy Committee to work on under the helm of Mr. Dwyer.

Board questions and comments followed on the Handbook.

Mrs. Brand commented on Enclosure 8, Page 1, IV-Board of Ed Committee and Liaison Responsibilities, and stated that Board members can be voting members on building committees. Mr. Dwyer responded that Page 1 is the Table of Contents, Page 9 describes the building committee and this language is directly from of the Board Bylaws. Ms. Iacono stated that there was a ruling from Assistant Town Attorney Mrs. Kennelly. Mrs. Brand stated that she thinks that should be cited.

Mrs. Brand referred to Page 8, the Board of Health and Parks and Rec description states "members" and they are both voting members. Mr. Dwyer stated that the Bylaws don't have the word voting in it. Mrs. Brand stated that CES has the word "voting member" in the Bylaws and it is not written in the Handbook.

Ms. Iacono commented on Page 10, meeting schedule of other Town bodies. She thought it would be helpful to add a line, "Please visit the Town website for any schedule changes" and list the Town website.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that the Committee had a few topics they really wanted to get Board feedback on tonight. Feedback on the Handbook can be sent via email. This is the fourth draft of the Handbook and the one recurring topic is having only existing practice, Bylaws, in the Handbook or things that should either become practice or Bylaws.

Mr. Convertito commented on the cover memo of Enclosure No. 8, Item 1-Proposed budget review language. After a great deal of discussion, the Committee settled on documenting what is currently done and then came up with suggestions to be included. The committee had initially set a timetable of August for the Board to hold a meeting and discuss long and short term goals and priorities for the upcoming operating and capital budgets. For the Board to set certain goals on a yearly basis gives a little more clarity and focus throughout the year. The others were just suggested timeframes for when the Board should take up certain issues. This is a Handbook; can be amended if it doesn't work but it gives the public an idea of what time of year they should be looking for the things that interest them.

Ms. Iacono asked what the goal is in terms of adopting the Handbook.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that the Committee would like feedback on the proposal to add more specifics for each month on the master calendar.

Mrs. Brand recommended that there be an August discussion of goals and a vote in September. She stated that there should also be place holders on the master calendar for items that are on the agenda at certain times of the year. This will help the Board to stay on track so.

Mr. Convertito stated that the Committee did not get more specific with agenda items because there is a conflict with the Bylaws. The Bylaws say the Superintendent sets the agenda; and we didn't want to get into a discussion of changing the Bylaws. There is one item that would require a Bylaw change; Item 2-Adoption of the meeting schedule. Mrs. Brand stated that she thinks it would help everyone if they had an idea of what time of year certain items will be coming up.

Dr. Title stated at the Board workshop Bob Rader talked about the Board setting goals for the Board as opposed to the Board setting goals for the school system and he does not see anything in the Handbook about the Board setting goals for the Board. Mr. Dwyer stated that on page 2 of the memo, the first sentence in bold is really two different thoughts; there would be a discussion of long and short term goals and objectives which could be both for the school district and for ourselves as a Board and in August a separate discussion about priorities for the upcoming operating and capital budgets. If you separate it, there are three different topics.

Ms. Iacono remanded this back to the Policy Committee to tighten up the language on the August meeting and get some further clarification.

Mrs. Kennelly commented on the issue of the meeting schedule being adopted as opposed to being issued. By adopting it, there would be Board discussion and a vote as opposed to just being issued the meeting schedule. Adopting the meeting schedule would require a Bylaw change.

Ms. Iacono asked to save this until the Bylaws are reviewed/revised in November.

Dr. Title stated that he is not clear on the intent of the budget schedule and the language needs to be very clear so there is no misunderstanding. He also commented that individual Board members giving input prior to the Superintendent's budget coming out is different from the Board as a whole and it is the Superintendent's budget when it comes out and that language needs to be clear.

Mrs. Kennelly stated her perception is that the Board is amenable to the idea of putting some material into the Handbook that does not reflect current practice, but we want it to be practice, so the committee will work on language and come back to the Board again for discussion and agreement.

Ms. Iacono asked to be clear that the committee has had an in-depth conversation with the Superintendent and his staff as our expectations will change and they need to be able to meet them. Mrs. Kennelly stated that Dr. Title has seen every draft and is involved in every part.

Ms. Iacono stated asked that this not come out of Committee until you have voted that this is something that we should be talking about.

9. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer to suspend the rules and continue the meeting to 11:15 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

10. Public Comments and Petitions

Joanne LaVista, Sasapequan Road, spoke in favor of naming the fifth grade wing at North Stratfield School in honor of Nancy Hanlon.

Michelle McCabe, Chair of Fuel for Learning Partnership, commented that the change that has occurred this year has been wonderful; it is having a huge impact. She also commented that the

direction the Handbook is going is great; to have set goals allows the community to be invested in it and to get people interested in the lunch program and participating in the lunch program.

Emily Price, Towne House Road, commented on pay to play and asked the Board to think out of the box, there has to be another way. Please don't cut sports.

Mary Hogue, Stonewall Lane, commented on the potential of pay to play being an option and stated that she is personally hoping that won't be where we end up.

Nancy Tevolacci, Stoneleigh Drive, read a letter in support of naming the fifth grade wing at North Stratfield in honor of Nancy Hanlon.

11. Open Board Comment

Mr. Liu commented that he was a guest presenter at the Arts in Action Day at Fairfield Woods Middle School and thanked them for that opportunity. He suggested that the PTAs at Tomlinson and Roger Ludlowe Middle School might want to think of something similar because the arts is a really important part of our students' education.

Dr. Title stated that this morning he started to work on ways to meet the \$250,000 reduction. They will have little to no impact, no staff, no programs and will not include pay to play. They will be out to the Board early next week, posted on the website and on the May 22 agenda for approval.

Mr. Convertito announced that Sherman School's cafeteria opens tomorrow.

12. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 11:02 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Jessica Gerber
Secretary