

Board of Education, Fairfield Public Schools
501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room, Fairfield, CT

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Voting Summary:

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 12, 2013.

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 12, 2013.” Mrs. Kennelly asked that on page 3 the minutes be changed to read “North Stratfield” instead of “Stratfield”. Motion passed 8-0 (Ms. Iacono was not present for this vote.)

Old Business

Approval of Elementary Math Curriculum, Grades PK-2

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Iacono seconded the recommended motion, “that the Board of Education approve the Elementary Math Curriculum, Grades PK-2.” Motion passed 7-2 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery in favor; Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand against).

Approval of Policy 5514-Students-Administration of Medication in the Schools.

Mrs. Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve Policy 5514-Students-Administration of Medication in Schools.” Motion passed 8-0 (Mr. Convertito was not in the room at the time.)

New Business

Establish Date and Time of Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School Graduation.

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Iacono seconded the recommended motion, “that the Board of Education establish June 27, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School.”

Motion to Extend

At 10:55 p.m. Ms. Iacono moved/Mr. Kery seconded to extend the meeting to 11:20 p.m. Motion passed, 9-0.

Mrs. Kennelly moved/Mr. Liu seconded to amend the original motion to establish June 20, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School. Amendment passed 5-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene and Mr. Kery against.)

The amended motion, “that the Board of Education establish June 20, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School” passed 5-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene and Mr. Kery against.)

Adjournment

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education Adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned 11:15 p.m.

Detailed Minutes:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. Present were members Jennifer Kennelly, John Convertito, Perry Liu, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Pamela Iacono (arrived 8:58 p.m.), Paul Fattibene, Tim Kery, and Sue Brand. Others present were Dr. Title, student representatives from FLHS and FWHS, members of Central Office and approximately 100 members of the public.

2. Chairman Phil Dwyer led the Board and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Special Reading

Mr. Jim Coyne, Fairfield Warde High School Headmaster, introduced Delia Motavalli, FWHS student, to read her essay "This I Believe" as featured on NPR. Mr. Liu asked for copies of this essay for the Board.

4. Presentation of Draft Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans

Dr. Title clarified that these plans are being presented at this meeting for information, and at the next meeting, the Board may approve the draft plans' transmittal to CT Department of Education (CSDE) for approval.

Teacher Evaluation Plan

Ms. Leffert thanked the committee members for their hard work and input, which began last September at a CES Consortium. Ms. Leffert stated that the committee, after researching 4 different models, decided to go with a hybrid plan, deriving from the CT model (SEED) and aligning with the Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model.

Ms. Brand asked about the cost of the Marzano plan, and Ms. Leffert responded that the only real cost is the Professional Development; there is money identified to cover those expenses; there are 3 days in the summer and maybe one in the spring; calibration work must be done by administrators and also teacher mentors to help colleagues; and that this plan needs to be approved by CSDE prior to the roll-out. Ms. Brand also stated that the teachers should understand that to be 'proficient' is not a bad thing. Ms. Leffert stated that 'proficient' is a great place to be; and this plan will again be reviewed within the next year or two.

Mr. Fattibene asked about page 6. Ms. Leffert explained that the school climate survey will be used; that the 10% parent feedback will be used, rather than the 10% peer feedback. Mr. Fattibene asked about page 27 and the use of standardized assessments in the student learning objectives. Ms. Leffert stated that non-standardized assessments may be used in the grades, such as grade 1, where standardized assessments do not take place; page 28 is specific to Fairfield; teachers will set a target after initial assessments; aligning this with the school improvement plans that teachers can pick from. Ms. Leffert clarified that grey areas are guidance counselors, deans, and social workers; those are the areas where there are no standardized assessments.

Mrs. Brand stated that calibration will be consistent and the Common Core is spelled out clearly.

Mr. Convertito, referred to enclosure 1D. Ms. Leffert explained that this list was not all inclusive and there may be more indicators and this document will be reviewed yearly by a committee. Mr. Convertito stated that having so many variables does not create consistency. Ms. Leffert stated that this is really aligned toward school improvement plans, and it is not anticipated that all schools will be targeting the same things. Dr. Title stated that the district gives the same assessments, but depending on the needs of the schools, teachers may or may not use those assessments; that there is a consistency in the district regarding testing, but the results

will determine the goals. Mr. Convertito stated that he sees school improvement plans as separate from teacher evaluation. Dr. Title stated that this is to create alignment; we are absorbing a major amount of school reform.

Ms. Leffert, in response to Mr. Convertito, stated that the piece that was reduced was the number of observations. Rather than 6, there will be 3; more formal observations for newer and struggling teachers; this is following the state guidelines. Regarding parent feedback, Mr. Convertito asked whether results are diluted by using school-wide assessment. Ms. Leffert stated that the school will identify 2 or 3 things to focus on and the teacher will select one of those things to improve. For example, if one of the things to improve is 'communication with families' then the teacher may choose to create a newsletter.

In response to Mrs. Kennelly, Ms. Leffert stated that the climate survey is currently being used as those results are available now, but each year there will be a new survey with new targets. Additionally, Ms. Leffert stated the parent feedback is not designed to evaluate individual teachers. Mr. Kery stated that this process seems retroactive. Ms. Leffert stated that this gives the school the opportunity to prioritize each year. Mrs. Kennelly asked that these documents be placed online. Dr. Title stated the state is developing a survey and provides a feedback loop. In response to Mrs. Kennelly, Dr. Title stated it has been a rough road for the state with these pilots, and we are not even sure who has submitted their plans.

Mrs. Kennelly asked how teachers will be evaluated in the first year to determine which teachers are already proficient. Ms. Leffert stated that this will have to be worked on, but all teachers will have 3 observations, state regulations will be followed. There is more information on page 1G, and the state knows there is work to be done here.

Mrs. Brand asked if the survey could be modified for certain pieces, and Ms. Leffert stated that the survey must have validity.

Mrs. Kennelly suggested a group to be pulled out is anyone implementing new curriculum.

Mr. Convertito asked what support is in place to implement this system. Ms. Leffert stated that the numbers are even across the levels. Dr. Title stated it will be a challenge to roll this out.

Mr. Kery asked if there might be a move towards peer review and Ms. Leffert stated that the thought is to engage teachers to reflect on their practice rather than on being judgmental.

Administrator Evaluation Plan

Ms. Leffert stated the committee elected to adopt the SEED plan for the Administrator Evaluation Plan, which aligns with the Teacher Evaluation Plan.

Mr. Convertito stated that this is a top down plan that lacks input from people on the ground. Ms. Leffert stated that this plan does not offer that choice; the 10% must be done through focus groups, surveys, or other options.

Mr. Dwyer stated that transmittal of the DRAFT plan will be approved at the next meeting, and Ms. Leffert stated that the state is aware that May 7 is the target date.

5. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 12, 2013

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 12, 2013." Mrs. Kennelly asked that on page 3 the minutes be

changed to read "North Stratfield" instead of "Stratfield". Motion passed 8-0 (Ms. Iacono was not present for this vote.)

6. Student Reports

Danielle Clark and Acacia Longley reported that Girls Varsity Lacrosse beat Ludlowe, 12-8, a very exciting game. Several track students qualified for FCIAC and All-State. Infinite Campus has launched, marking period 3 is closing, AP testing starts May 6, College Fair starts tomorrow, Warde Day is this Friday, Prom is coming up, Earth Day is coming up, and the Debate Team qualified for States. Key Club will be fundraising, and 4 music students participated in the Hartford music festival, and the spring musical was 3 weeks ago.

Marco Congello and Alice Rocha reported that CAPT testing was successfully completed. UConn's CT writing project recognized several students, the school musical "Oliver" will be performed soon, and Youth American Cancer Society is participating in the fund raiser "Pennies for Patients". For the 10th year in a row, Battle of the Houses took place, and it was a success. The joint FLHS/FWHS boys ski team, girls ski team, and boys hockey teams all won state championships, and the FLHS cheerleaders took home the state championship as well. The Spanish Dept. trip to Spain is leaving on Thursday, and proms are coming up. Marco Congello then asked Alice Rocha to prom and she accepted the invitation. (Lots of applause.)

Dr. Title stated he will provide the dates of the proms to the BOE.

7. Board Committee/Liaison Reports

Mrs. Kennelly stated that the Policy Committee is working on an Attendance Policy.

Mr. Liu stated that Fairfield Woods Building Committee will not be closed out until it gets passed to the BOE.

8. Superintendent's Report

Review of Quarterly Financial Update Through March 31, 2013 - Doreen Munsell

Ms. Munsell stated that we will be within budget, but there are challenges with the year ending so late. The Osborn Hill costs were moved to the Town. With Hurricane Sandy, 75% was moved to the town through FEMA. With Sandy Hook, there are many security projects underway. The Blizzard cost was almost \$200,000. We are about on-target with custodial overtime. Pupil personnel is also on target, final payment of excess cost will come in and the state will finalize the payment in May. Transportation will be over due to special education. There are still some unknowns. Electricity will be more due to the late school year, and the K-8 wireless project is underway.

Mrs. Brand asked to see the quarterly report for AON, and whatever the BOF gets, the BOE should get. Mrs. Brand also asked if there were any contractual issues with school being in session so late in the year. Ms. Leffert stated that she has 20 staff members that have submitted paperwork showing vacation plans prior to the end of the year. Some staff members must work a few extra days to fulfill their obligations.

Mr. Kery asked what was percent was budgeted for excess cost payment. Ms. Munsell stated that 75% was budgeted and it is on target.

9. Old Business

A. *Approval of Elementary Math Curriculum, Grades PK-2*

Recommended Motion: "that the Board of Education approve the Elementary Math Curriculum, Grades PK-2"
Moved by Mrs. Gerber, seconded by Ms. Iacono.

Dr. Cutaia-Leonard walked through the curriculum documents and identified highlights and Mr. Wakeman walked through sample units of study.

Mr. Convertito asked for an explanation of the \$80,000 textbook re-allocation. Mr. Wakeman stated the majority will go towards writing of the unit of grades PK-2. Dr. Title stated that some money might be shifted to cover Grade 6-10 resources. Mr. Convertito asked why there is a cost to cover the writing of units. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that it is for teachers to write over the summer and not during teaching time, which is how the Grade 3-5 curriculum was written. Mr. Convertito stated that if teachers write units of study, then does that mean we won't be adopting a textbook next year; Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated no. Mr. Liu stated that the money is not being used very well and does not understand why there isn't a textbook and the money will be spent twice.

Mrs. Brand stated that she likes the parent guide for homework but is concerned that there is no resource to help with parents.

Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that early release of data strands show that test scores have improved; Mr. Wakeman stated that it is a bit premature, but several areas of the Blue Ribbon scores have increased for grades 3-5. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that there are some assumptions with those scores; and the data that was compared was January 2012 to January 2013. Mr. Convertito asked if there were some data strands that did not improve and Mr. Wakeman stated yes.

Mr. Liu asked that flexible grouping be explained. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that this can occur across a grade level or within a classroom based on pre-assessments on units of study; followed by post-assessments. Mr. Liu asked if this means that students are separated to work on their strengths. Mr. Wakeman stated that differentiating is more skill-based. Mr. Liu said as he understands it, flexible grouping runs counter to the current instructional model. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that students share strategies and learn from one another, but not in place of the teacher.

Mrs. Kennelly is glad to hear about the parent guide; the curriculum is strong, tweaking will occur, the debate is over the text, and Mrs. Kenelly asked if Dr. Cutaia-Leonard could explain why Singapore is not being used, as was discussed in the informative 2½ hour meeting. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that she is confident that units of study to be implemented will equal or exceed programs reviewed in the past; differentiation has been built in; and that pieces will continue to be developed. Mrs. Kennelly stated that with the SBAC test out there, this course of action may be the wiser. Dr. Title stated that staff is committed to this, there is a unity, and the staff believes in this which is very important. Mrs. Brand asked if this has been presented to the elementary staff, and Dr. Cutaia-Leonard responded that they have received the documents for review.

Public Comment on Vote:

Anthony Abazzia, Juniper Lane, stated that the Scott Foresman text is outdated, and we need to make sure we are moving forward.

Eileen Liu, Waterville Road, stated a vote tonight should not disqualify other texts, and is worried that this is being created in isolation.

Tricia Donovan, Taintor Drive, provided a math assessment/homework from her son's class and stated it was a poorly worded problem; when she posted the problem on a math forum, math experts stated that open ended questions can go wrong. Resources should be vetted.

Jerry McCormick, Waterville Road, asked the Board to respectfully consider Singapore math, and that teachers should be supported with world class resources.

Suzanne Miska, Rygate Road, stated that she is confused about the curriculum and the text; her concern is that she needs a textbook for parents.

Annie Braley, Bibbins Avenue, states that a text is needed.

Pam Williams, Riverfield teacher, thanked the Board for recognizing teachers and feels fortunate to see students learning in a better way. She stated that students are stronger mathematicians and asked the Board to approve this curriculum.

Bethany Winchester, Riverfield teacher, stated that she is invested in the math process and asked the Board to support the PK-2 curriculum.

Nancy Meehan, Mill Hill teacher, stated that she has seen her share of curricula, and has never seen students so engaged and teachers so engaged.

Kevin Chase, Mill Hill Principal, asked the Board to support the curriculum.

Nicole Vinoski, Brookside Drive, stated that her son actually talks about problem solving, and asked the Board to stand behind this curriculum.

Steve Poricelli, North Stratfield teacher, stated that new curriculum helps students learn about math. Grade 3 through grade 5 teachers are unified with this program; administration has asked for input and made changes.

Martha Murphy, Wellington Drive, stated that she supports the PK-2 Math curriculum.

Dawn Llewellyn, Sturges Road, thanked the Board and teachers.

Michelle Baker, Pepperidge Circle, stated that she has been to every Board meeting and asked the Board to listen to the teachers.

Board Questions:

Mr. Liu asked when a text will be purchased. Dr. Title stated that this will be looked at next year. Mr. Liu stated that he cannot support this curriculum without a text; a text with a strong guideline is the way to go.

Dr. Cutaia-Leonard, in a response to a question from Mr. Kery, stated we are not precluded from using anything based on this structure. Mr. Kery stated that Westport built its own middle school curriculum. Mr. Kery stated that our team has chosen to do the hardest thing, and he stated that he is comfortable with this and will support it.

Mr. Fattibene asked to what extent the Board is required to review the de-facto text, and tonight the only charge is to approve the curriculum, not the text.

Mrs. Brand stated that she has no doubt that students are more engaged in math and she is thrilled about this. She stated that curriculum is data driven; she does not support this curriculum because she does not think it is ready.

Mr. Convertito stated that he trusts our own professionals and he will support this curriculum.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that she will support this curriculum, which does not preclude choosing a text. She stated the Board will be vigilant, and she thanked the public for fulfilling a vital role.

Ms. Iacono stated that she trusts the staff for taking the time and states that she fully trusts the staff and supports the curriculum.

Mrs. Gerber thanked the staff, and stated that she supports the curriculum.

Mr. Dwyer stated that he supports the curriculum not only because teachers approve it, but because he thinks it is right.

Motion passed 7-2 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery in favor; Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand against).

B. Approval of Policy 5514- Students-Administration of Medication in the Schools

Mrs. Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve Policy 5514-Students-Administration of Medication in Schools”

Public Comment: None

Motion passed 8-0 (Mr. Convertito was not in the room at the time.)

10. New Business

A. Establish Date and Time of Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School Graduation.

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Iacono seconded the recommended motion, “that the Board of Education establish June 27, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School.”

Mr. Kery asked if it would be impractical to move the graduation date up. Mr. Hatzis stated that the final exam schedule would be a problem for teachers who teach both juniors and seniors.

Motion to Extend

At 10:55 p.m. Ms. Iacono moved/Mr. Kery seconded to extend the meeting to 11:20 p.m. Motion passed, 9-0.

Mrs. Kennelly moved/Mr. Liu seconded to amend the original motion to establish June 20, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School.

Amendment passed 5-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene and Mr. Kery against.)

Mrs. Kennelly stated there are countless stories of hardships with internships and school orientations.

In response to a question from Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Coyne stated that Warde does not have a large number of students with an orientation problem, but that the least disruptive date for graduation is June 27.

Ms. Iacono stated that we should stay with June 27th.

In response to a question from Mrs. Brand, Dr. Title stated that the statute requires students to attend school for 180 days; if students graduate on June 20, the seniors would have to return for 3 days after graduation.

Mr. Liu stated that students deserve to have a celebration.

Public Comment:

Betty Ann O'Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, stated that some people think the graduation date is June 26.

Jeannie Pacewitz, Sigwin Drive, asked why put more stress on our high schools, keep the graduation date at June 27.

Sofia Lascano, Brooklawn Avenue, stated that her sister is in high school, that students need transition time, have planned to graduate on June 20, and already invited family for that date.

Lisa Havey, PTAC president, stated that her son is a junior and if senior exams are held earlier it would be extremely disruptive.

Mr. Hatzis wanted to share that the internship program would not be started any earlier and that moving the date up would shorten the internship experience. Vendors may feel this is not in the best interest.

The amended motion, "that the Board of Education establish June 20, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School" passed 5-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene and Mr. Kery against.)

B. Discussion on Updated Long-Range Facilities Plan

Dr. Title stated that this plan would be best discussed in the fall, after new enrollment figures and other updates.

11. Public Comments and Petitions: None

12. Open Board Comment

Mrs. Brand mentioned that Glenn Mackno Won Principal of the year award from PTSA.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that the Odyssey of the Mind Competition was last weekend and the Stratfield team is moving on in its competition.

13. Adjournment

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion "that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education Adjourn." Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned 11:15 p.m.

Submitted by

Mrs. Jessica Gerber

Fairfield Public Schools

Board of Education

Secretary