

Board of Education, Fairfield Public Schools  
501 Kings Highway East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room, Fairfield, CT  
**Tuesday, June 11, 2013**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Voting Summary:**

**Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call**

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:50PM. Present were members Jennifer Kennelly, John Convertito, Perry Liu, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Pamela Iacono, Paul Fattibene, Tim Kery, and Sue Brand. Others present were Dr. Title, student representatives from FLHS and FWHS, members of the Central Office Leadership Team and approximately 25 members of the public.

**Approval of Minutes**

***Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 21, 2013.***

Ms. Iacono moved/Mr. Convertito seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 21, 2013.” Motion passed 9-0.

**Board Committee/Liaison Reports**

Mr. Convertito moved/Ms. Iacono seconded a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Policy #6200-Instruction-Curriculum: report on Committee Discussion and CSDE Response to 10-4b. After discussion Mr. Convertito and Ms. Iacono withdrew the motion.

**Convene to Executive Session**

At 10:27PM, Mrs. Kennelly moved/Mr. Convertito seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education convene to Executive Session to discuss Superintendent Evaluation”. Motion passed 9-0.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 12:34AM

**Adjournment**

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Kery seconded the recommended motion, “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education Adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned 12:35AM.

**Detailed Minutes:**

**Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call**

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:50PM. Present were members Jennifer Kennelly, John Convertito, Perry Liu, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Pamela Iacono, Paul Fattibene, Tim Kery, and Sue Brand. Others present were Dr. Title, student representatives from FLHS and FWHS, members of the Central Office Leadership Team and approximately 25 members of the public.

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

**Presentation**

Chairman Dwyer and Dr. Title recognized Mr. Glenn Mackno for receiving the CT PTSA Award for Outstanding Middle School Administrator. Mr. Mackno thanked the staff of RLMS and the Board for their support during his 34 years and wished the best for the Board and the district.

**Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Iacono moved/Mr. Convertito seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 21, 2013.” Motion passed 9-0.

## **Student Reports**

Marco Congello and Alice Rocha, Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Liaisons, reported that senior internships are underway, the Girls Tennis Team won the FCIAC championship, Tennis Coach John Reisert won the FCIAC coach of the year, the National Honor Society inducted 99 new members, graduation rehearsals are on the 19<sup>th</sup>, former NBA star and author Chris Herren will speak at FLHS on Monday, the Unified Track Meet was held in May, Prom was wonderful; the representatives enjoyed the year and dared the next representatives to top the Prom proposal.

Danielle Clarke, Fairfield Warde High School Student Liaison reported that senior exams are beginning, the music awards were presented last night, a student woodworking exhibit is taking place, there will be a cross country alumni run on June 15, the National Honor Society induction ceremony will be held on Wednesday, and stated that it has been great year and that she will be returning as student representative next year as well.

Board members thanked the student representatives for their service.

## **Board Committee/Liaison Reports**

### *Communications Committee Presentation*

Mrs. Gerber presented her handout which included the following: Final Draft Presentation of Goals, November 2012 Idea List, a sample quarterly memo, and sample biographies. Ms. Gerber addressed the Communications List and requested Board input regarding the 11 items on the list: Keep in contact with PTAs, send memos to PTAs, hold a Town Hall Meeting, Facebook page was not recommended, student recognition, clarify terms, conduct a BOE survey, post BOE member biographies, PR intern, Fall discussion of by-laws, and public comment discussion. Mr. Dwyer summarized that absent comments from the Board, the committee may move forward with items 1-6 and 8, items 10 and 11 will require by-law changes and feedback is requested on items 7 and 9. Mrs. Gerber stated that the Communications Committee will disband after the final meeting in June.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that she would like to see more formal communication regarding student recognition; that the survey might be difficult to do; and that the PR intern idea is a good one. Ms. Iacono stated that students were previously recognized by the Board and she was unsure why that practice was stopped; she suggested looking at when the by-laws were changed around 2007. Mrs. Brand stated that this was done in the past and it was wonderful, and teachers were also recognized which was really nice. Mrs. Brand encouraged the committee to construct the survey carefully to get the kind of information that is needed. Ms. Iacono stated she does not recommend a survey as an outside consultant will have to be hired; Ms. Iacono stated that she encourages the administration to seek out the opportunity for an intern.

Mr. Fattibene stated that attending PTA meetings and having a Town Hall Meeting are the 2 most important items; these establish interaction with Board members on a less formal basis.

Mr. Dwyer thanked Mrs. Gerber for leading a very good committee.

Mrs. Brand reported on the Goals Advisory Committee, and thanked Jeff Burt for his service. Mrs. Brand stated that the state is working on a common calendar, and thanked Sands Cleary for addressing the Osborn Hill concerns up front and quickly.

### *Continued Discussion on Policy #6200-Instruction-Curriculum: Report on Committee Discussion and CSDE Response to 10-4b*

Mr. Dwyer gave the background on the pilot which he stated conformed to the spirit and intent of the state law and our policy; he stated that local Boards of Education must have some flexibility with regards to piloting curriculum, resources, textbooks and materials before committing valuable resources. Mr. Dwyer stated that due to the technical interpretation of the State's staff attorney, a sub-committee will conduct an inquiry of count 2 of the complaint; Mr. Dwyer then read a quote from the State Commissioner of Education and stated that the Board recognized this issue back in January, and the Policy Committee is now looking for feedback on Policy #6200 with regards to conducting a pilot.

Mrs. Kennelly thanked all members for the feedback she received, and stated that Policy #6200 remains in committee; that the committee agreed that pilots are a valuable tool that is necessary; that there is a need to define pilot programs, establish parameters, and review the nature of the reporting. Mrs. Kennelly stated that the group was opposed to what happened

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this year, the group does not believe that the policy is flawed, and that the Policy Committee is working on giving guidance to the administration on this issue.

Mr. Fattibene stated that he had requested an executive session on this issue, as the State BOE has ordered an inquiry which is ongoing; that there has been miscommunication, misstatements, and mischaracterizations. Mr. Fattibene stated that this is a serious matter that is not being treated seriously, that he never received a copy of the reply to the state, and there is nothing in the state staff attorney's investigative report indicating that our policies run contrary to statutory provisions.

Mrs. Brand stated that the regulations may need to be improved rather than the policy.

Mr. Liu stated that he agrees with Mr. Fattibene that it is a serious matter, and that after the initial complaint, the Board was not privy to any of this information; the Board should have had some input into how this was handled.

Mrs. Gerber stated that the Board did receive some updates on this issue. Mr. Dwyer stated that each document received from the state was provided to the Board with the exception of some transmittal emails or memos.

Ms. Iacono stated that she feels out of the loop and would welcome an executive session on this, and would like an explanation on where the misrepresentation of facts occurred as stated by Mr. Fattibene. Ms. Iacono stated that Board in essence approved the use of the piloted text by not exercising the right to vote against the book use; there were 2 opportunities to vote on the book and the majority of the Board declined. Ms. Iacono cited previous minutes with quotes from Board members in support of the continued use of the book, and a quote stating the administration was taking the issue seriously; Ms. Iacono also stated the Board took the issue seriously as there were 2 full discussions in December and January; and that this feels like a witch hunt with only one side being played out in the press. Ms. Iacono stated that she is not dismissing this, but the Board has voted on a new book for the fall; by the time the state finishes the inquiry the school year will be over and the process is being reviewed by the Policy Committee.

Mrs. Kennelly invited Ms. Iacono to the attend policy meeting on Monday; she thanked Ms. Iacono for reminder, and stated that the vote to not stop the book use was made because the old book was given back; she stated that she knows what she doesn't want a future pilot to look like; she believes the policy is not flawed.

Mrs. Brand suggested that the Town attorney be invited to speak to the Board on this issue. Mr. Dwyer stated that this is a procedural hearing; there are so few of these that the State BOE is still trying to figure this out and the State will send more information. Mr. Fattibene stated that the process is very clear. Mr. Kery stated that legal review is a good idea but that the Board attorney should be used rather than the Town attorney. Mr. Dwyer stated that Attorney Houston takes the lead on Board matters.

Mr. Fattibene stated that it may be advisable for the Board to seek its own counsel which may not be the traditional Board attorney, and that he has some concerns regarding Dr. Title's reply to the State with regards to how the Board was represented in the response.

In response to Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Kennelly stated that the wording in the CAFE policy was not particularly helpful and that state statutes might be revisited. Mrs. Parks stated that the CAFE policy is in line with the law and there is a reluctance to reach out to other districts in order to ensure that the policy has been legally tested, which is what CAFE does.

Mr. Liu stated that because of this we are charting new territory; the Board was not put into the loop at all, and he wants to ensure this doesn't happen again.

Mr. Converito stated that, with no disrespect to the public, this conversation should not be in public session; it not a policy failure, it is a Board failure; there is no pilot policy, the State doesn't even have one.

Mr. Converito moved/Ms. Iacono seconded a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Policy #6200-Instruction-Curriculum: report on Committee Discussion and CSDE Response to 10-4b. After discussion Mr. Converito and Ms. Iacono withdrew the motion, provided this discussion ends.

Mr. Dwyer asked for the Board's forbearance for Dr. Title to end the discussion. Dr. Title stated that he took this issue very seriously; at the January meeting he reported the steps being taken to remedy the situation including what process would be used for final textbook adoption; in April, pilot results were shared showing that in the aggregate students performed as well as or better with this book than previous Algebra students using the other book; this does not mean

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that some students didn't struggle. Dr. Title stated he spent a lot of time with the State and was surprised at the comments from the State's attorney; there were a number of conversations on how to take care of this issue. In consulting with the BOE attorney, Dr. Title stated that we are in compliance with the state statute, and that he has also reached out to the Director of the CT Association of Superintendent's for guidance who stated that every local Board will be in trouble if all pilots must go before local Boards. Dr. Title stated that pilots are criticized for being too short and not providing enough time to gather information, as well as for being too long and taking up too much time.

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### *Update on District Initiatives*

Dr. Title Stated that from July 15 to mid-February, the PCB issue, Hurricane Sandy, Sandy Hook, the FLHS roof, and Storm Nemo all occurred; an enormous amount of district leadership time was spent on those issues. Dr. Title stated that in response to Sandy Hook, doorbells were installed, visitor stations implemented at the high schools, the Police Dept. had 2 sessions with our schools on improving school security, front door signage was installed, visitor ropes were put up, communication with the police was upgraded, and additional security measures may be added in the future.

Dr. Title stated that virtually all capital non-recurring projects are either complete or almost complete, and this was done at or under budget. The elementary roof project is done, the TMS façade is almost done, the TMS flooring with asbestos tiles is complete, the TMS traffic project is almost complete, the Jennings bathrooms are done, the Dwight boilers are done, and the 8 oil tanks are replaced.

Dr. Title reviewed the District-wide Initiative List and highlighted a few; moving to Infinite Campus is making good progress; school climate teams have been reviewing the survey and looking for trends, each school now includes a strand on school climate using the data from the survey; Dr. Title stated that he has observed Data Teams at all schools; school improvement plans are ongoing; the health insurance bid resulted in \$843,000 of savings; the Racial Imbalance Plan was approved by the State Board; the Teacher Evaluation Plan was completed; Osborn Hill now has a building committee; and the Riverfield and Fairfield Ludlowe Projects are moving forward to the RTM. Dr. Title stated that he is proud of the work done on these aggressive initiatives.

In response to Mrs. Brand, Dr. Title stated that the PCB presentation will be given by a consultant in the fall, as this is a Town-wide issue. Dr. Title stated that he will provide a sample of student success plans. Dr. Title stated that rolling out Infinite Campus is more like a 2-3 year process, as Infinite Campus is forcing some standardization and consistency as more features are added. Mrs. Brand asked for more information on item 28, World Language.

Mr. Kery stated that he wanted to recognize the efforts of the staff for dealing with all the events throughout the year; the OHS PCB problem; the hurricane; the FLHS roof and Sandy Hook. Mr. Kery stated that he is thankful for all the efforts with security and has the Infinite Campus app on his phone.

In response to Mrs. Gerber, Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that curriculum change is not required for the change to full-day Kindergarten, and that contractual planning time will be provided for the teachers. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that teachers have the flexibility to add a second recess if needed.

Mrs. Kennelly asked about #7, if a large number of referrals was received, and whether the staff could handle that. Ms. Leonardi stated it is hard to gage the number of referrals due to it being the first year; the number reported should be looked at for trends; and work with the staff should focus on reporting; all buildings have anonymous reporting; and they are currently looking at anonymous electronic reporting that can be substantiated. Ms. Leonardi stated that an investigation often takes far longer and uses more resources to resolve an issue; a lot is being learned in the investigation process.

In response to Mrs. Kennelly, Dr. Boice stated that 8<sup>th</sup> graders could be asked for Gifted program input prior to the end of the year.

In response to Mrs. Kennelly, Mrs. Parks stated that Plato is being used in a blended fashion for homebound students; data is still being collected and the hope is to use it more extensively as an intervention tool in the high school.

Mr. Convertito commended Dr. Title and staff for completing these district initiatives; he requested more information on items 15 and 17. Mr. Dwyer stated that he would put that on a future agenda. Ms. Iacono stated that she was

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privileged to witness an entry plan in progress with Ms. Anziano as she followed all the steps as outlined by Dr. Title; it was fascinating to watch an administrator do all the things that Dr. Title spoke about.

Mrs. Brand asked about #36, and asked what the leasing options are for Central Office and the Alternative High School. Dr. Title stated that the Central Office lease expires June 30 2015; it is not a lease but a condominium arrangement; an alternative has not yet been pursued; the maintenance lease was just done last year; the Alternative High School has an option to purchase which requires Town action. In response to Mrs. Brand, Dr. Title stated that if a purchase was pursued, Board action would be required.

**Old Business:** None

### **New Business**

#### *First Reading of Policy #5112-Students-Attendance, Excused Absences and Truancy*

Mrs. Kennelly stated that this policy is including policies 5115 and 5117 and 5118, and is bringing the policy into compliance with the state.

Mrs. Brand asked if on page 3, the statement “control” of the child” is legal language; Mrs. Kennelly stated that it is.

#### *Discussion on Planning for the 2014-2015 Budget Review Process*

Mr. Dwyer provided a handout regarding the Budget Review Goal, and suggested that Board members add to this list and settle on it by August or sooner. Mrs. Kennelly proposed that item 8 provide for a May public meeting to discuss budget cuts. Mrs. Brand stated that she would like to begin the process in August. Mr. Dwyer stated that the Board will probably not do all 9 items in the next fiscal year.

### **Public Comments and Petitions**

Dawn Llewellyn, Sturges Road, stated that no one is on a witch hunt and that parents want transparency; several classes at TMS and Woods are having a difficult time with Chapters 8 and 9 and students are re-taking tests; she is hoping that the Board will get statistical analysis on the website.

Trudi Durell, Woodcrest Road, stated she is concerned and frustrated with overtime and rental fees; she requested written clarification for the charges and urges Central Office and the Board of Education to provide clear direction.

Nancy Haberly, Duck Farm Road, stated that for nearly 3 years our district has taken a turn for the worse; program cuts have happened but our Central Office staff continues to grow; responsible solutions are needed.

Kelly Crisp, Papermill Lane, stated that when reflecting on the use of the CPM textbook, this should have all been avoided as early as last May; her group worked hard to inform administration of their concerns prior to filing the complaint with the state.

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, stated that public education is very important to her family; that her faith in where we are going has been shaken; that she is concerned that rules and requirements and policies have taken a backseat to another agenda and she doesn't know what that is.

Susie Byrnes, Cross Hwy, stated that it was disappointing to hear others being blamed for not resolving the book matter. She also stated that she received an email from her son's teacher that the entire class failed chapters 8 and 9 and the test was re-taken; she stated that she wishes people would take ownership and responsibility.

### **Open Board Comment**

Mr. Dwyer stated that the Riverfield and Fairfield Ludlowe High School projects will be going before the RTM; that both projects are important and fall within the waterfall; and he encouraged Board members to attend the committee meetings.

Mrs. Brand stated that she would like to see school lunch on the agenda with regards to the high school schedule. Mr. Dwyer stated that there has been an interest in this with the Board and the administration.

Mr. Liu stated that regarding Tom Cullen's memo, at a first glance, does not seem to fit the spirit on what was voted on, and understands the confusion from PTAs. Dr. Title stated that the regulations and the memo apply to a host of groups and

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there are all kinds of people impacted by this; groups who previously were exempt from rental and overtime fees, will remain exempt from rental fees and will incur only overtime fees.

Mr. Liu stated that weekends were not discussed at all, and he would like to provide Board input on the regulations.

**Convene to Executive Session**

At 10:27PM, Mrs. Kennelly moved/Mr. Convertito seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education convene to Executive Session to discuss Superintendent Evaluation”. Motion passed 9-0.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 12:34AM

**Adjournment**

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Kery seconded the recommended motion, “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education Adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned 12:35AM.