

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, November 9, 2010

Minutes of the Education Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, November 9, 2010, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand called the Education Meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Pamela Iacono, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu, Mr. John Mitola, Ms. Stacey Zahn and Mrs. Sue Dow (arrived 7:37 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Representative Allison Reich, Fairfield Warde High School Student Representative Stephanie Teixeira and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 35 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Mrs. Brand led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Mrs. Brand reminded everyone that it is easy for misinformation to spread and that Board members should be cognizant of that when speaking in public. The Board wants to maintain public trust and in order to do that our business must take place at the table.
4. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of October 12, 2010 and the Education Meeting of October 12, 2010.

Motion carried: 8:0:1. Ms. Zahn abstained.

5. Public Comments and Petitions-
Mary Hogue, Stonewall Lane, expressed concern over the class size policy on tonight's agenda and hopes the Board will be thoughtful when discussing this tonight and pay attention to how vital this is to students in their achievement and to teachers in order to teach properly.
6. Extraordinary Business-
 - A. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve McKinley's School Improvement Plan.

Dr. Title commented that under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, if an individual school does not meet the Federal guidelines for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years in a row in the same subject area, it is considered as a school in need of improvement; and McKinley School has been designated as a school in need of improvement. When that happens, if you are not a Title I school, the only consequence is to develop a School Improvement Plan; and if you are a Title I school, then a series of consequences kick in. McKinley School is a Title I school because it receives Title I funds, and a School Improvement Plan on the template written by the state has to be submitted and approved by the Board of Education within three months of being identified. In addition to the School Improvement Plan, the school district is required to offer Public School Choice to families who have children at McKinley. This has already been offered because there is a full opt-in/opt-out program at McKinley. To comply with the law, when the school received this designation in August, another letter was sent notifying parents of this option. If McKinley makes Adequate Yearly Progress in 2011, that will be the only thing that happens. If McKinley does not make Adequate Yearly Progress, we will be required to offer supplemental educational services to children at McKinley using some of the Title I allocation. That would happen in the next school year and would go on from there. This is solely about school improvement at McKinley and has nothing to do with racial imbalance. No Child Left Behind is about performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test.

Mrs. Anna Cutaia-Leonard stated that along with the two requirements of providing Public School Choice and writing a School Improvement Plan, at least ten percent of Title I funds must be dedicated for professional development this school year. What is also required for McKinley is a peer review process of the School Improvement Plan as well as Board approval. A group of five administrators worked with Dr. Vail reviewing the plan, providing feedback and making revisions prior to submitting it to the Board of Education for approval this evening. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard stated that the State Department of Education requires that specific components be included in the plan. Some of those components include: measurable goals, indicators of progress, an action plan with timeline, who is responsible for the strategies, professional development that will support the strategies, how the district is going to support the school, as well as any additional resources and supports that are necessary. She briefly reviewed the plan.

McKinley Principal Dr. Ginger Vail highlighted some of the key strategies that are already in place at McKinley. When she first started in July, which was before the CMT scores were returned, she began meeting with key staff members to talk about initiatives that had been in place at McKinley and how to improve and revise them in this school year. A big part of the process during the summer was to submit a United Way School of Hope Grant to Coastal Fairfield County. McKinley is one of three schools in the county that receives funds from United Way. Two key points were identified that are going to be different this year. The first is to include two professional development day opportunities for staff members and the addition of a literacy intern to work with the Language Arts Consultant. The grant was submitted on August 13. Dr. Vail stated that she has met individually with every staff member and with parents, asking questions and developing goals. She briefly highlighted some of the initiatives that have begun at McKinley. Teachers and staff have set goals, a PD needs assessment was held which identified small group reading and math workshop, two professional development sessions were held on small group reading and math workshop, a process has been developed to restructure and streamline all interventions and Dr. Vail meets bi-monthly on every student who is receiving intervention. She is looking to maximize effectiveness, including tutoring sessions, early intervention specialists and after-school activities. The PTA meetings have been restructured to include an educational and conversational component. In addition, a Family Read-In Night was held; and Dr. Vail is working with several outside agencies to create a sponsorship for Family Read-In Nights as well and adding the Rise and Read Program. Dr. Vail stated that there will be as much streamlining and revising as needed to ensure that we are doing everything we can every day for every student.

Approximately 30 minutes of Board questions and comments followed.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- B. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve the 2011-12 Student Calendar.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- C. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Liu that the Board of Education approve Policy #5119 – Student Discipline, Suspension/Expulsion.

Ms. Zahn stated that this was discussed at the Policy Subcommittee meeting. Board members had asked that it be returned to subcommittee for alternate language regarding retaining a hearing officer for expulsions. Mrs. Brand stated that Board members received alternate language in case anyone wants to offer an amendment.

Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola to amend Policy #5119 – Student Discipline, Suspension/Expulsion with alternate language as offered by the Subcommittee. Article VIII - Procedures Governing Expulsion Hearing, Section B - Hearing Panel (page 10): “The Board will hear expulsions within the required time by Statute. In the event the Board of Education cannot seat a quorum (five or more members) to hear an expulsion, the Superintendent will be authorized to retain a hearing officer.”

Dr. Title stated that this language came from the Policy Subcommittee, and it is not being recommended by the Superintendent. The Superintendent is in favor of the original language.

Mr. Fattibene moved to amend the amendment and eliminate “a quorum (five or more members)” and replace it with three or more members. This was acceptable to Mrs. Iacono the mover.

Board comments followed on five or more Board members versus three or more.

Dr. Title clarified that three affirmative votes are needed no matter how many Board members attend the hearing. If three Board members attend and it is a two to one vote, the expulsion does not go through. Majority does not rule. That is the origin of five Board members.

Board comments continued.

Mrs. Iacono stated that legally this is allowable and she will support the amendment.

Vote on amendment to the amendment failed: 2:7:0. Mr. Fattibene and Mrs. Iacono voted in favor.

Back to amendment: “The Board will hear expulsions within the required time by Statute. In the event the Board of Education cannot seat a quorum (five or more members) to hear an expulsion, the Superintendent will be authorized to retain a hearing officer.”

Board comments followed.

Vote on amendment carried: 5:4:0. Mrs. Dow, Mr. Mitola, Mrs. Iacono, Mr. Kery and Mr. Fattibene voted in favor. Mr. Liu, Ms. Zahn, Mrs. Brand and Mrs. Albin voted in opposition.

Vote on policy as amended carried: 9:0:0.

- D. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education eliminate Policies #5120 – Expulsion and #5320 – Weapons as discussed at the September 28, 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

Board questions followed.

Motion carried: 8:0:0. Mrs. Albin was out of the room during the vote.

- E. First Read of Policies-

- Policy #0521 – Non-discrimination
- Policy #6164 – Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol
- Policy #6310 – Class Size

Ms. Zahn stated that Policy #6310 – Class Size is being eliminated and going back to the Policy Subcommittee.

Dr. Title stated that Policy #0521 – Non-discrimination and Policy #6164 – Drugs, Tobacco & Alcohol came out of the CABA Audit and the language is from CABA. Policy #6164 – Drugs, Tobacco & Alcohol is instructional, not a disciplinary policy.

Board comments and questions followed.

7. Reports and Recommendations-

- ◆ Allison Reich reported that the first quarter has just ended at Fairfield Ludlowe HS; everyone is adjusting to the new Headmaster, Mrs. Reale; and the school store has started selling more nutritionally healthy food.
- ◆ Stephanie Teixeira reported that fall sports at Fairfield Warde HS have had great results. The Girls Field Hockey and Boys Soccer teams made FCIAC finals; the Girls Soccer team made FCIACs; Boys Volleyball made States; and Caroline Edison came in first place and Harry Warnick came in third in Cross Country at States. The Drama Team is working on a show that will be held on November 21 and 22, called *Watch on the Rye*. The Junior Class held a pajama and book drive.
- ◆ Mrs. Albin reported that she will be moderating one of the sessions at the CABA Convention on Friday morning concerning issues with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students. She will also be on the cast of characters for the Nutmeg Board, acting out a mock board meeting.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that she attended the Board of Health meeting last night, and a change is being made to allow students to self administer medications as long as they have parent and physician permission. The nursing supervisor's staff is working with central office technology staff to develop a program and database that will allow the nurses to disseminate information about health concerns throughout the district. CES met on Thursday. There will be a groundbreaking on December 2nd for a new building. There was also discussion about the number of bank failures and where municipalities are keeping their funds. Mrs. Brand stated that she called the Town's Chief Financial Officer, and Fairfield does not use just one bank.
- ◆ Mrs. Dow reported that she and Mrs. Albin will be the two delegates representing the Board at the Delegate Assembly. She asked if any Board member has a concern to please email her or Mrs. Albin before the 18th. Dr. Title was the guest speaker at the last SEPTA meeting. SEPTA is trying to arrange a program with the police department in case a special needs student is ever stopped, the police would know to handle it differently. Tours of the police station will be offered to children with special needs on November 13. SEPTA meets tomorrow and will have a presentation on assistive technology by Ann Leffert.
- ◆ Mr. Fattibene reported that he had his first Transportation Advisory Committee request for a bus stop.
- ◆ Mrs. Iacono asked if it is safe to assume that if Mrs. Dow and Mrs. Albin do not get feedback from Board members on the CABA Delegate Assembly that they would vote in favor and asked what the protocol is if there are concerns. Mrs. Brand stated that she called CABA and it can be done with consensus through the delegates. The delegates can let the Board know through email if there are any issues. Mrs. Iacono reported that the Finance, Budget and Community Relations Committee will not meet on November 15; the next meeting will be December 6. She stated that Board members received a report from the Special Projects Standing Building Committee in their Friday packet. In terms acceptance of the annexes, there is an issue regarding whether or not the building committee funds that were allocated for this project cover paying for the Smart Boards. Mrs. Iacono asked the First Selectman to get information from Bond Counsel as to whether or not Smart Boards could be paid for with this bond. The Board of Finance does not want Smart Boards to be paid for through the bonding, and she asked for clarification on whether the Board of Finance issued that statement before or after the Ed Spec came out. If the Special Projects Standing Building Committee does not support purchasing the Smart Boards, Mrs. Iacono will ask for an amendment to the Ed Spec to discount the Smart Board request for Sherman. The Board of

Education would have to approve it to close out the project. Osborn Hill PTA paid for their Smart Boards. Board discussion followed on this item.

- ◆ Mr. Kery reported that PTA Council met last Wednesday. The Curriculum Committee is doing the 5th grade astronomy program again this year. The Green Team Committee has put together a program in honor of the extra work our custodians have to do around the recycling program, which will be on November 23. The Facilities Plan is before the subcommittee based on the recommendations from the administration. The committee has done walkthroughs at Riverfield and Holland Hill, which are the next two schools before the committee. The committee will continue the process of evaluating requests and looking at where to eliminate wants and focus on needs. We have a new format that the administration has proposed. Enrollment projections for the next year are due in November and December 14th for the long term projections as well as building capacity updates for the elementary level.
- ◆ Mr. Liu-no report.
- ◆ Mr. Mitola-no report.
- ◆ Mrs. Zahn reported that the November 17 Curriculum, Policy and Special Programs Committee meeting is being cancelled. The next meeting will be December 8.

8. Open Board Discussion-None

9. Mr. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:25 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary