

APPROVED

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, June 12, 2012

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, June 12, 2012, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Ms. Pamela Iacono called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:34 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 Emma Sweet, Fairfield Warde High School Student Representative Stephanie Teixeira and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 50 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Ms. Iacono led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Student Recognition
Dr. Title recognized the student representatives to the Board of Education who will be graduating next week: Fairfield Ludlowe High School-Emma Sweet and Sara Wiant and Fairfield Warde High School-Stephanie Teixeira. Ms. Iacono thanked them for all they have done this year representing their student body at the Board table and congratulated them on their upcoming graduation.
4. Student Reports
 - Emma Sweet reported that at Fairfield Ludlowe HS senior internships end next Tuesday, and the internship reception will take place on June 20th. The Chamber Orchestra had their end of year concert last night at the Pequot Library, and there is an a capella concert tomorrow at the Fairfield Theatre Company. Senior Awards Night is June 20th and graduation is June 21st.
 - Stephanie Teixeira reported that at Fairfield Warde HS senior Alex Beyer was named a Presidential Scholar and was honored last week by the Board of Selectmen for his achievement. The FWHS Latin Team placed first in the state competition. Senior Harry Warnick placed first in State Opens and second in New England's for the 3200 meter run. Next Wednesday is Senior Awards Night and graduation is on Thursday.
5. Presentation
 - A. Presentation of RYASAP 2011 Profile of Student Life Survey
Mr. Robert Francis, RYASAP's Executive Director, stated that since 1985 RYASAP has been surveying students in grades 7-12 every three years on the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. About 15 years ago RYASAP found the Profile of Youth Survey by the Search Institute in Minneapolis that works on the philosophy of 40 developmental assets. The more assets a young person has, the less likely they are to engage in risky behaviors. The survey is self-reporting and completely anonymous. Mr. Francis briefly reviewed the survey data. This report provides insight into the behaviors, opportunities and challenges facing young people in Fairfield. A major change was the reduction in underage drinking, which is down 10 percentage points from when the survey was done four years ago. Also, only 5% of students said they used tobacco in the last 30 days. Mr. Francis pointed out that females scored higher than males in all but four developmental asset categories. Males had higher self-esteem, a stronger sense of purpose, were more apt to overcome adversity, and felt safe. A place to focus some attention would be on young males. Mr. Francis stated that this is Fairfield's data, you decide what to do with it and what concerns you. There is a 150 page report that goes along with this, and there are 180 questions that make up the 40 developmental assets and the risky behaviors. He reminded everyone that the only way to effectively reduce risky behaviors and increase thriving behaviors is to focus on the assets; do not focus on the negatives.

Mr. Dwyer stated that on page 5, Gender Differences, there are no scores listed for Values Diversity. Jeanne Dimuzio from RYASAP stated that she is the author and apologized for the oversight. She will add that information and send it to Dr. Title.

Mrs. Brand asked if there is any particular area that we should work on. Mr. Francis replied that teenagers do not feel as valued as they could be and recommended finding ways to increase their responsibility in decision-making about things that affect their lives.

6. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 8, 2012.

Mr. Fattibene asked to strike out the words "they both" on page 3, paragraph 3, 2nd sentence: Mr. Fattibene stated that he spoke with Attorney Houston and **they both** believe it is. He does not want to represent what Mr. Houston may or may not have said. Mr. Kery accepted this as a friendly amendment. This was also acceptable to Mr. Dwyer.

Motion carried: 9:0.0.

7. Committee/Liaison Reports

- Mrs. Brand reported that the Board of Health met last night and the Town budget adjustments will not have an impact on the Health Department, nursing coverage will remain the same. The June 4th meeting resulted in a legal opinion that confirmed that no nurse may allow a teacher to administer medication to a student while in an extra-curricular activity. Further, no substitute teacher may administer medication to a student. PCB testing and cleanup has been done at Osborn Hill and the district is awaiting test results.
- Mr. Dwyer reported that the Building Projects Review Committee will meet on Thursday.
- Mr. Fattibene reported that the Stratfield School Building Committee met. Some last minute invoices were paid and everything was pretty much wrapped up. An Executive Committee was formed to handle any loose ends, and he believes they moved to turn the school back over to the Board of Education.

8. Superintendent's Report

- A. School Improvement Plans Update

Dr. Title stated that this is a major initiative in the district in terms of improving student achievement. A School Improvement Plan template was developed that all schools used to develop a two-year plan in collaboration with their staff, based on student achievement data. It engaged them in a process of analyzing student performance data, celebrations and challenges. They developed strategies to improve student learning and to commit to and monitor those strategies throughout the year. Each school then posted their School Improvement Plan on their school website. Each school also created a school-wide data team to monitor data throughout the year and to adjust the strategies for next year as necessary. As a school system, we engaged in learning about Instructional Rounds. In October all administrators participated in an Instructional Rounds visit at Fairfield Warde High School. Sixty-four people spanned out among 32 classrooms to observe, take notes, compare data and give the Warde staff feedback on what they observed going on in the classrooms. After some additional training, every school hosted Instructional Rounds. Next year will include much more detailed work around grade level or departmental data teams. The first year of implementation went really well. Schools are continually self-assessing how they are doing towards the standards that the district set. We are working towards a culture where data is valued in the decision-making process and people are committing to changes in practice to improve student learning.

Board questions followed.

Mrs. Kennelly asked if the data from the RYASAP presentation on the assets can be made available and teachers made aware of it. Dr. Title replied that every School Improvement Plan has a School Climate piece which this fits right into.

Mrs. Brand asked if there are any commonalities between the elementary, middle and high schools, not just site-based but for the entire district. Dr. Title replied that we are starting to see some commonalities and they are being looked at across the grade levels so that professional development activities can be planned around that.

Mrs. Brand asked if the district has identified what we think student achievement is and how we are going to measure progress. Dr. Title replied that the first activity principals were asked to engage in last summer was what they want to achieve and what the right measures are. They brainstormed quite a list of potential data and ultimately landed on two or three to start with but that will be changing all the time.

Mr. Convertito asked to get a sampling across the three levels of what data has been collected thus far, what has changed and how the teams are reacting.

B. Racial Imbalance

Dr. Title reported that he has not received anything in writing from the State. He has heard second hand that McKinley School continues to be out of racial balance from the State's definition. This is about the minority population at McKinley compared to the majority population at McKinley which has to be within 25 percentage points of the district average, and we are at about 26, which is where we were a year ago. At that time tweaks were made to the Plan that was filed with the State, and the State approved it. As soon as something is received from the State, it will be shared with the Board.

9. Old Business

A. Mrs. Kennelly moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber that the Board of Education approve the Language Art Curriculum, Grades Preschool-5.

Mrs. Brand stated that she knows the district has recommendations in terms of homework and there are still inconsistencies from teacher to teacher, site to site. She would like to see not only homework but also the kind of homework be constant throughout the district.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

10. New Business

A. Food Service Program and Budget Summary

Mrs. Joann Fitzpatrick, Manager of Food and Nutrition Services, reviewed the accomplishments for this year and the goals for next year. As always, the goal is to have healthy food choices for children and to be sensitive to their preferences while providing these items. This year items with lower sodium and more whole grain products were purchased. The computer point of sale system was upgraded to a newer version, and computers were replaced in the cafeterias in order to complete this upgrade. A lower fee is currently being negotiated for parents who use the on-line payment system. This spring a student and parent survey was conducted; and the responses indicated that they wanted less processed foods, more made from scratch meals and more fresh fruits and vegetables. The number one goal next year is to implement the new USDA meal pattern at all schools and to educate students and parents on the new meal pattern requirements. All lunches will contain five meal components, and each child will have to select at least three of the five meal components: meat, grain, fruit, vegetable and milk. The big change is that they must select either a fruit or a vegetable. Another goal is to engage the services of a consultant with expertise in organizational food service programs to assist with addressing the survey

results. The survey results showed that email was the most popular way to communicate with parents, and we will be working with the IT Department on this.

Board questions and comments followed.

Mrs. Kennelly commented on communication and again suggested that the cafeteria manager put in the Friday Blast what meal went well and what the most popular recipe of the week was.

Mr. Liu asked what the definition of made from scratch is. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that pre-cooked beef is purchased and incorporated into recipes, which makes it a simple scratch recipe. Mr. Liu suggested that perhaps a goal could be to have some definitions so that parents know what from scratch means.

Mr. Liu commented on the products we will be focusing on and the ones we will be moving away from and stated that it would be great next June if the Board could see how much was eliminated, for example, less processed food, food with less fat or sodium, etc.

Mr. Liu commented on communication and stated that parents need to know what is going on and what their kids are eating. Mrs. Fitzpatrick stated that she is sending out a letter to parents explaining the new meal pattern and addressing pink slime.

Mr. Fattibene stated that it is his general perception that fresh foods may have different problems than processed foods as far as storage and asked if any changes or modifications are required as far as storage or refrigeration. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that has been taken into account as the kitchens are renovated there is larger refrigeration and freezer storage for items.

Mr. Convertito stated that he would really like to see an integration of the healthy foods with the cooking classes from the middle school to the high school. As students are taught how to cook, it can be integrated with the lunch program; learning what is in the food, how it is calculated, etc.

Ms. Iacono expressed concern with students waiting in line for lunch. A second serving line was just added at Sherman School, and unfortunately, a cashier has not been added for that line. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that the serving line was installed in April and a second cashier will be added in September.

Mrs. Doreen Munsell, Director of Finance and Business Services, reviewed the proposed 2012-2013 Food Service Program budget. The projected cash balance on hand as of July 1 is \$520,430; total revenue is about \$3,434,841; and total disbursements are \$3,371,218. This brings us to a change in the fund balance that is computed to an operating position adjusting for accounts receivable, inventory on hand and accounts payable which comes to a 1.7 month standing at year end. This figure must be reported annually to the State and cannot exceed three months.

Board questions and comments followed.

Mr. Kery asked what the ideal number is at year end, 1 month, 2 months, etc. Mrs. Munsell replied 1 ½ to 2 months. Mr. Kery asked if we will be able to maintain that month and a half with the lunch price increase this year or will we have to continue looking at lunch price increases year over year. Mrs. Munsell replied that it depends on what our costs end up being with the new meal pattern.

Mr. Dwyer commented on the number of students who said they don't eat lunch because there is not enough time to get through the line and asked if we have the budgetary resources and the ability to cut those numbers next year. Mr. Cullen replied that the principal runs their cafeteria program; the lunch shifts are left up to the principal, and in general it works. One of the things to look at is what is being served; when it is pizza day or a special food day, the lines are longer. The second serving line and having two cashiers definitely gets the kids through quicker. A

second serving line was added at Osborn Hill and Sherman and one is being proposed with the renovations at Riverfield. A lot of the existing elementary schools were sized for 399 students and they have close to 500 students.

Mr. Dwyer stated that his question is when the survey is done next year are you expecting the numbers to go down because of what has been implemented and what will be implemented in September; and if not, what else can we do to bring them down.

Mrs. Gerber asked if doing more from scratch meals will require more work for the kitchen workers and will it require an additional person. Mrs. Fitzpatrick stated that she is going to be looking at the number of meal options that are available and they might be pared down.

Mr. Liu commented on engaging the services of a consultant and asked if that person will have a direct impact on helping to make all of these changes. Mrs. Fitzpatrick stated that she will be researching who to consider, interviewing and determining what we as a district want to accomplish and what that person can help us with.

Mr. Convertito asked where the additional cashier at Sherman School is budgeted. Mrs. Munsell replied that it will be a matter of reassigning. There are only two elementary schools with multi-serving lines so it may be a matter of just pulling hours from one of the bigger schools, a middle school or a high school. Mr. Convertito asked how someone can be pulled from a middle school or high school to work at an elementary school; isn't lunch generally served at the same time between all of the three schools. Mrs. Fitzpatrick stated that at an elementary school there are 3 workers, at a high school or middle school there are 8-10 workers. Mr. Convertito stated that there was just a lengthy discussion that kids don't buy healthy lunches because they don't want to wait in line and now staff is going to be reduced at a middle school or high school making those lines even longer. Money should be added in the budget for an extra cashier so manpower is not pulled from already understaffed kitchens that can't get meals out on time.

Ms. Iacono expressed concern with moving a person from the middle school or the high school to the elementary school level and asked if that will increase the time it takes a student at the middle school or the high school to get lunch. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied she is going to look at staff and work on that. Ms. Iacono asked if a determination is made that someone can't be moved are there sufficient funds in the budget to get the second cashier at Sherman. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that there are.

Mrs. Brand asked which schools are having trouble getting lunch to the students because the lines are too long. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that some of the schools that have larger enrollments and larger participation are a bit problematic.

Mrs. Brand stated that unless we know what sites have a problem, we will not be able to address it. She asked if there is a more creative way of collecting the funds so that we are not jamming lines and cashiers into an already confined and small space.

- B. Mrs. Kennelly moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve participation in the Healthy Food Certification Program for school year 2012-2013 with the exclusion of the sale of food: (1) sold in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of the event, and (3) such food is not sold from a vending machine or school store.

Mr. Liu commented that two meetings ago when the Board was discussing Healthy Food Certification, one of our student reps expressed concern about raising money and what the limitations are. Mr. Liu stated that he looked into some of her questions, and unfortunately, she was given the wrong information. It says nothing that students can't sell food; there limitations on when they can sell food and what they can sell. It just has to qualify and fit within the healthy food standards. He suggested reaching out to the students and to those groups that are trying to

raise money and help educate them on what the rules are and help them to find alternatives to raising money within the food area.

Motion carried: 9:0:0

- C. Mr. Liu moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that the Board of Education allow the sale of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes: (1) sold in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of the event, and (3) such food is not sold from a vending machine or school store.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- D. Mr. Liu moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education approve the recommended school lunch prices for the 2012-2013 school year, as contained in Enclosure No. 5.

Board comments followed.

Mr. Convertito stated that he cannot vote on this because he does not believe the budget is in order yet.

Mrs. Brand stated that she does not recall seeing any concerns about pricing in the survey results. She asked about the overall trend of children on free and reduced lunch; has there been a steady increase, has it plateaued? Mrs. Fitzpatrick stated that there was about a 3% increase this year. The numbers were steady until the problem with the economy a few years ago.

Mrs. Brand asked if we have any indication of the number of people who qualify versus the number who actually take advantage. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that there are some who qualify and don't take advantage.

Motion carried: 8:1:0. Mr. Convertito voted in opposition.

- E. Mr. Liu moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that the Board of Education approve a salary and benefit adjustment for Food Service Workers for the 2012-2013 school year.

Mrs. Brand expressed concern with the benefit package.

Mr. Liu asked when the last time was that the food service workers got a raise. Mrs. Fitzpatrick replied that it was last year and the year before that they got a zero.

Dr. Title stated that the benefits part was increased with respect to single coverage and the two person family coverage is completely covered by the employee.

Mr. Fattibene asked for clarification on the line that says proposed 0% increase in employee contribution. Mrs. Munsell replied that it is a 1% increase, the heading is incorrect. It should say proposed 1% increase in employee contribution.

Mr. Kery commented that these employees are typically making less than \$15,000 per year and with the amount they pay for health insurance, they are essentially working for benefits.

Ms. Iacono stated that everyone in the district has only taken a zero once. This is a self-sustaining program that pays for itself, and she believes these employees have earned an increase. When you are contributing essentially your entire salary to your benefit contribution, that is something that needs to be taken into consideration.

Motion carried: 7:2:0. Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Kery and Mr. Fattibene voted in favor. Mrs. Brand and Mr. Liu voted in opposition.

F. First Read of Board of Education Handbook

Mrs. Kennelly stated that this is on as a first read tonight with a vote at the next Board meeting.

Board comments and questions followed.

Ms. Iacono stated that if anyone has further comments, to please email them to Mrs. Kennelly.

11. Public Comments and Petitions-

Analiase Paik, Sky Top Terrace, expressed concern with the new gifted program at the middle schools and read a letter that was co-signed by 30 fellow parents of identified gifted children. It is their contention that the middle school gifted program approved by the Board of Education and the program taking place are not the same. Identified gifted students have received few or none of the services outlined in the gifted brochure. Despite attempts to obtain a status report on how many children had received the services outlined in the brochure, that information was not provided. An FOI request was filed and a report was received that contained inaccurate information. Further requests for information about the services provided were denied. She requested that the Board of Ed commence a full investigation to identify what went wrong and ensure it doesn't happen again. She also requested that the Board of Ed provide a public forum for parents of gifted children to discuss their experiences this year and provide feedback. She urged the Board to implement a policy to ensure that parents of gifted children receive complete and up to date information about Fairfield's gifted programs and services at the beginning of the year and at regular intervals throughout the year. Lastly, she urged the Board to implement a formal feedback and grievance process so that action can be taken when issues arise.

Michelle McCabe, outgoing Chair of the Fuel for Learning Partnership, commented on providing students with the healthiest, highest quality food possible. One thing that did not come up tonight was how many students are buying lunch. The more students who buy lunch, the more money that comes in and the more the program has to invest in its workers, food and everything that is needed. The participation rate should be looked at and if it is low in the beginning of the year, it needs to be addressed so that by June of next year the students are buying a great product that we are marketing to them, we are getting feedback from them and they are included in the process.

Tara Cook, incoming Chair for the Fuel for Learning Partnership, commented that she is pleased about all of the changes and new initiatives that will take place next year. She is also pleased that our government is coming up with new standards but would like us to look at those as the minimal amount and to strive for better than what the USDA is demanding of us. She stated that our community needs to be educated, and she will be looking to create a partnership throughout Fairfield to bring educational programs to our community so that as the school food improves in quality our community understands why we are doing that.

Dawn Llewellyn, Sturges Road, expressed concern with the Middle School Gifted Program and the lack of resources and support allocated to the program. Not only is Fairfield's Middle School Gifted & Talented Program significantly underfunded and neglected, the middle school curriculum is weak and lacks core and fundamental blocks. She commented on the gifted middle school program in Westport and compared Fairfield's middle school curriculum to Westport's middle school curriculum. Westport offers a higher grade level of commitment to its accelerated students and has a stronger course offering for all students.

Kelsey Llewellyn, a student at the middle school, continued comparing Fairfield's middle school curriculum, programs and class size to that of Westport. She stated that the district administrators need to be more creative and effective in how they allocate the school budget and structure the curriculum. Fairfield's curriculum should be modeled after Westport's since it has been very successful.

Akshay Gupta, Bailey Road, commented on the gifted program and described the experience his children have had in the middle school and elementary school gifted program. The experience in the elementary school is better than in the middle school but pretty bad. The pilot program was tremendous but the implementation of the real program has fallen flat. He encouraged the Board to make this an important topic and further investigation into this.

Linda Murphy, a member of the Fuel for Learning Partnership, commented on the Board's comments on the proposed increase in the budget revenue due to a projected increase in enrollment along with the question about the increase in the cost of food because of the fresh food. She stated that perhaps the increase in the amount of food needed is for the increase in enrollment not just fresh food. She also commented that the Food Service website has been wonderful; however, if there was a hyperlink to click for each menu item so all of the ingredients would pop up, it would be enormously helpful to a parent who has a child with allergies.

12. Open Board Comment

Mrs. Brand commented on an article that was recently in the newspaper on high absentee rates, and the clarification provided by Dr. Title that in fact we are actually within the norms and pretty much in the average. She thought that clarification was important.

13. Mrs. Kennelly moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:50 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Jessica Gerber
Secretary