

The Enclosures referred to in the Agenda are available for inspection at each of the three Public Libraries in Fairfield, Fairfield Public Schools' website <http://www.fairfieldschools.org/> and the Education Center, 501 Kings Highway East.

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***THE PUBLIC IS REQUESTED TO TURN OFF CELL PHONES OR PLACE THEM ON VIBRATE PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING***

Board of Education  
Fairfield Public Schools  
Fairfield, CT

Tuesday, June 12, 2012

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**7:30 P.M.**

**501 Kings Highway East**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room**

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Student Recognition
- IV. Presentation
  - A. Presentation of RYASAP 2011 Profile of Student Life Survey – Robert Francis
- V. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 8, 2012

Recommended Motion: “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 8, 2012”

(Enclosure No. 1)

VI. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports

Emma Sweet/Sara Wiant	Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Liaison
Stephanie Teixeira	Fairfield Warde High School Student Liaison
Brand, Sue	Board of Health Member
Convertito, John	Special Projects Standing Building Committee Member

Dwyer, Philip	Building Projects Review Committee Member Cooperative Educational Services (CES) Council Member
Fattibene, Paul	Stratfield Building Committee Liaison Transportation Advisory Committee Member
Gerber, Jessica	Fairfield Ludlowe High School Building Committee Liaison Parks & Recreation Commission Member SEPTA Liaison
Iacono, Pamela	Representative Town Meeting (RTM) Liaison Riverfield Building Committee Liaison
Kennelly, Jennifer	Fairfield Warde High School Building Committee Liaison Policy Committee Chair
Kery, Tim	Board of Finance Liaison PTA Council Liaison
Liu, Perry	Fairfield Woods Building Committee Liaison

- VII. Superintendent's Report  
 A. School Improvement Plans Update  
 B. Racial Imbalance

(Enclosure No. 2)

VIII. Old Business

- A. Approval of Language Arts Curriculum, Grades Preschool-5

Recommended Motion: "that the Board of Education approve the Language Arts Curriculum, Grades Preschool-5"

IX. New Business

- A. Food Service Program and Budget Summary

(Enclosure No. 3)

- B. Approval of Participation in the Healthy Food Certification Program

Recommended Motion: "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"

(Enclosure No. 4)

- C. Approval of the Sale of Beverages Not Listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes

Recommended Motion: "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"

D. Approval of Public School Lunch Prices

Recommended Motion: "that the Board of Education approve the recommended school lunch prices for the 2012-2013 school year, as contained in Enclosure No. 5"

(Enclosure No. 5)

E. Salary and Benefit Adjustment for Food Service Workers

Recommended Motion: "that the Board of Education approve a salary and benefit adjustment for Food Service Workers for the 2012-2013 school year"

(Enclosure No. 6)

F. First Read of Board of Education Handbook

(Enclosure No. 7)

X. Public Comments and Petitions

During this period the Board will hear comments and receive petitions from any citizen present at the meeting. Any single presentation must be limited to two minutes, and audio-visual equipment cannot be used without the advance authorization of the Chairman. **The Board will not hear comment on individual personnel matters or comments addressed to a specific member(s) of the Board.** Decorum will be enforced. Citizens are asked to comment on any voting item at the time the item is under consideration by the Board.

XI. Open Board Comment

XII. Adjournment

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 26, 2012	Board of Education Regular Board Meeting	7:30 p.m. 501 Kings Highway East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room
August 21, 2012	Board of Education Regular Board Meeting	7:30 p.m. 501 Kings Highway East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

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501 Kings Highway East  
Fairfield, CT 06825  
Telephone: (203) 255-8379

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

ENCLOSURE NO. 1

JUN 12 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Convertito asked if there would be any indicators between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 they both 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

School Improvement Plans: Update  
June 2012

JUN 12 2012

One of the core elements of the "District Improvement Strategy" (Attachment 1) is that improvement in student learning comes primarily through improvement in instructional practice. Thoughtful and structured School Improvement Plans are one way to systematize the improvement in practice across the school district while respecting the different needs of individual schools.

We began the School Improvement Plan work during the 2010-2011 school year through a series of professional development activities for school and district leaders. These were summarized in a document shared with the Board and the public on June 14, 2011 (Attachment 2). Our work during 2011-2012 built on the previous year's work, and we extended it to include the following elements:

1. A School Improvement Plan (SIP) Template (Attachment 3), agreed to by the administrative team, that all schools used this year to develop a 2-year Plan in collaboration with their staff, based on student achievement data. The SIP includes the following elements:
  - A summary of student performance data, celebrations and challenges
  - Student performance targets, some common across schools serving the same grade levels
  - A Problem of Practice based on student performance data, classroom observation and staff input based on the Common Core of Teaching
  - A principal/headmaster's Theory of Action, a statement of the strategy undergirding the school's improvement efforts
  - School-wide strategies to improve student learning, including adult actions and methods to assess the effectiveness of the strategies
  - Grade level/ departmental strategies

For most schools, this work differed from the way they had previously developed School Improvement Plans. Professional development focused on working with school leaders and their School Improvement Teams to develop the elements of the Plan, which was completed by most schools in the late fall or early winter and posted to each school's website.

2. To monitor and strengthen the effectiveness of the School Improvement Plans, each school began the process of implementing School-wide Data Teams. Our goal this year was for each school to begin implementation of a School-wide Data Team, often a similar group of staff that developed the SIP. As this was new work in virtually every school, we developed a set of Standards for School-Wide Data Teams (Attachment 4), which includes the standards for School Improvement Plans. Schools used this document as a way to understand their school's status in relationship to exemplary practice. It is designed as a self-assessment tool for schools to chart their course on the School Improvement Plan journey. Schools are at various stages of implementing

School-wide Data Teams, and this work will continue through all of next year. School-wide Data Teams use common assessments across a grade level or department to determine the effectiveness of the instructional program for the entire school and what changes to instructional practice need to occur to improve student achievement. Some examples of these assessments would be Blue Ribbon math assessments at the elementary and middle schools. We developed a Team Observation Form to capture the essential elements of an effective Team, and I used it in my observations of all the school's Improvement Teams this year (Attachment 5). The annual Cycle of School Improvement is Attachment 6.

3. A third element of school improvement is the establishment of grade level or departmental data teams. We set out the standards for effective teams (Attachment 7) at the department (secondary) or grade level (elementary). While some schools had existing teams of this nature (sometimes referred to as Professional Learning Communities or PLC's), embedding this practice into all schools, grade levels and departments will be future work.
4. A fourth element of improving instructional practice is called Instructional Rounds (Attachment 8). Instructional Rounds are not an improvement strategy unto themselves; rather, they can be an accelerant to an improvement strategy already under way. Teams of teachers and administrators visit classrooms and look for evidence that efforts to address the Problem of Practice identified by the school are actually occurring in the classroom. Patterns are described and suggestions made for the next level of work for the school. In October all administrators participated in an Instructional Rounds visit at Fairfield Warde High School. In addition, schools hosted Instructional Rounds and principals/staff participated in Instructional Rounds visits to other schools. In some cases, school-based Instructional Rounds occurred involving staff from one building, although this was not a required activity. This will be continuing work next year, involving more teachers leading Instructional Rounds after participating in my training this year.

In many cases, this is a change in work and a change in culture. Some of the work is substantively different (developing a Theory of Action, a Problem of Practice based on data) and some of the work is cultural (willing to share practice with others). To get a sense of both of these elements, I have included an excerpt from a document I shared with our Administrative Team in September after we had made some commitments for this year and before we began our work (Attachment 9). It also includes my Theory of Action for improvement of the school system.

While the School Improvement Plans are designed as two-year plans, all schools will be doing some revision to the Plans for 2012-2013 based on (1) student performance data; (2) Instructional Rounds (school-based and district-based); and (3) feedback from teachers on the effectiveness of the strategies in their existing Plans.

## A District Improvement Strategy for the Fairfield Public Schools

David G. Title

For the past six months I have been learning as much as I can about the Fairfield Public Schools. As part of my "Entry Plan" I have conducted dozens of one-on-one and small group interviews, observed classroom instruction in every school, met with representatives from each PTA and read a wide range of documents to help me understand not only the current status of the Fairfield Public Schools, but also to understand the history, tradition and culture of this community and its school system.

In developing this document I have also drawn on my professional experience in education over the past 32 years and my 6 months of experience leading this school district and observing its operations first-hand. My learning about Fairfield and its public schools will continue. As that happens, undoubtedly strategies that, at this point, seem fruitful may not turn out to be so, and other strategies will be necessary. The ideas in this document, therefore, reflect my best thinking at this time but these ideas are subject to refinement in the future.

As I have said repeatedly at public appearances, our school system does not need a complete overhaul. It is a high-performing system on many common measures. We offer a comprehensive program in academics, arts and athletics. Our student performance measures are among the highest in the state. Hence, the urgency for change may be less immediate here than in other school systems.

However, in an ever-changing world, complacency sows the seeds for decline. Just a few examples – changes in the student population, changes in workforce requirements, changes in technology – illustrate that if we simply continue the status quo, our performance may not keep pace with the world.

If we have programs or systems that are working well, then continuing to support those programs or systems makes sense. Where we can grow and improve our programs or systems – that is where we can focus our change efforts. Given that we cannot focus on an unlimited number of initiatives, we need to focus our efforts on the change initiatives most likely to give us a good return on our investment of time, energy and resources.

One common thread through much of my entry plan discussions has been a sense of what I term "initiative fatigue." Often, this feeling comes about because the school system takes on many disconnected change initiatives that cannot be implemented well. As a result, many change efforts fail to achieve the promised results and the resulting cynicism makes future change increasingly difficult to achieve. What I hope to outline here is a strategy to focus our energy for future changes – a lens, if you will, through which proposed changes will be viewed before implementation begins.

## THE GOAL

Before we can begin to talk about change, we need to understand the goal – the end – we have in mind. My simple version reads like this:

*Our goal is to ensure that all students acquire the skills and knowledge outlined in our comprehensive, rigorous instructional program.*

In other words, we are here to improve student achievement. Offering a comprehensive, rigorous program is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to achieving this goal. We need to maintain a first-rate instructional program that ensures that students who master it are prepared for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The instructional program, as I see it, is not simply the academic courses, but encompasses, for example, displaying good character, problem-solving ability, collaboration skills and technological proficiency. It must be continually updated, which means weeding out obsolete elements that are no longer relevant to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century education. In other words, *what we teach* is critical – after all, doing a marvelous job of teaching the wrong content is not the outcome we want.

A truly premier school system ensures not only that the instructional program is first-rate, but also that all students achieve it. If we are to become a premier school system, our mission must be to “ensure” student success (not “hope” or “inspire” it). A truly premier school system targets success for all students.

## MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD THE GOAL

Given that our “end” is student learning, our progress toward that end needs to be measured in terms of student learning. Some examples of benchmarks that could be used to determine progress toward this goal are as follows (I invite discussion of additional measures or replacements of these suggestions):

- Percentage of student performance at Goal and at Advanced levels on CMT and CAPT
- Percentage of students performing at Basic or below on CMT and CAPT
- Number and percentage of students achieving 3 or higher on AP exams
- Number of students successfully completing a co-curricular program or activity (during school or after school)
- Percentage of students achieving their goals on Individualized Education Plans
- Percentage of students achieving the district standard on district-designed common assessments (meeting district standards on curriculum)
- Percentage of students achieving success in their first year of college
- Number of high school students needing credit recovery to graduate

These are neither precise targets nor an exhaustive list. For example, there is no measure of a student’s character development. They also represent data we may not be collecting currently. I bring them forward to lay out the general concept that we measure our success by examining data on student achievement. Determining the exact targets, timelines and measures is beyond the scope of this document. Improved student learning is the goal; everything else is a means to that end.

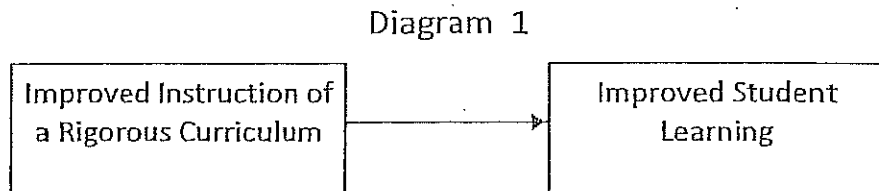
## HOW TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

Any strategy of improvement is, at its heart, based on a series of “if then” propositions that underlie the work. One may agree or disagree with these “if then” propositions; we may find that they seem correct now but are found to be inaccurate later. For example, we undertake professional development of teachers under the belief that if we improve the skills of teachers, then student learning will improve. Over time, that conditional statement has not always proven to work in practice. There may be a missing link in the chain – that is, something else that needs to occur to get the result one wants. In this case, it may be that the “if then” statement may be modified to state that if we improve the skill sets of teachers and if they change their instructional practices as a result, then student learning will improve. Hence, an improvement strategy is always subject to modification based on results.

The first underlying “if then” in this improvement strategy is this:

*If we improve instruction, then student achievement will improve.*

Diagram 1 shows this simple relationship.



Although this relationship sounds obvious, it is not clear that either educators or the general public actually fully believes it. Consider how often individuals will attribute student achievement results to factors other than instruction when asked to interpret results. Societal ills, video games, family background, the internet, home life and so forth are often listed as the primary factors influencing achievement.

### FOUR AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

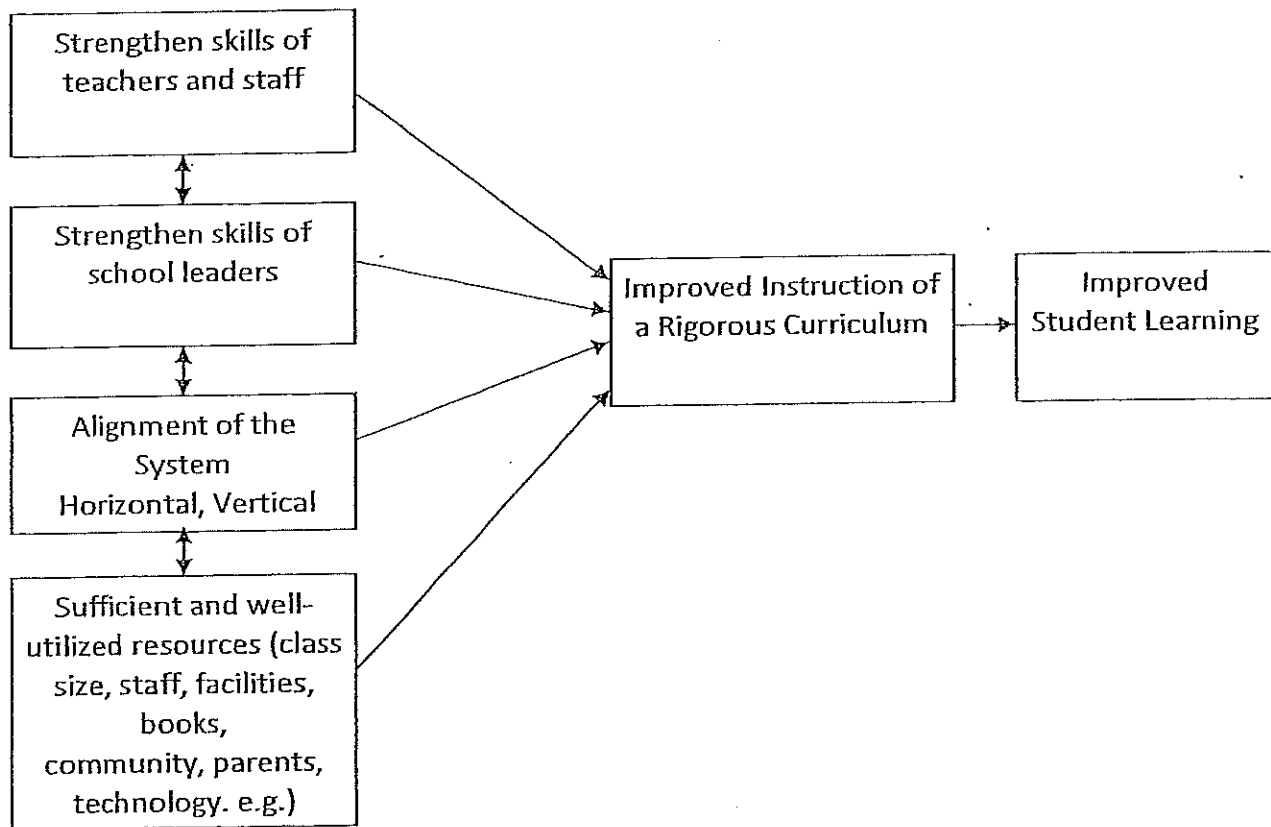
The next step in building a district improvement strategy is to identify a limited number of focus areas that have the most promise for improving instruction. Every “good idea” can be linked somehow to improved instruction; the issue is which ideas have the greatest promise of showing gains in student learning for the resources we devote to implementing them. In the corporate world, terms such as “return on investment” or “cost-benefit analysis” would apply here. In our case, one of our scarcest resources is time. Money is another scarce resource but time is often more within our control.

Just because something takes little time or few resources does not mean that it is worth doing; similarly, just because something takes a large amount of time or resources does not mean it is not worth doing. It is the expected benefit (in terms of accomplishing our goal) in relationship to the time and resources spent that’s important. In other words, where is the best place to commit the time of our staff to get the greatest return in terms of student learning?



I see four broad strands that, were we to concentrate our resources and make significant progress in each of these areas, would pay significant dividends in improving classroom instruction and, therefore, improving student learning. They are Teacher Skills, School Leader Skills, System Alignment and Instructional Resources. Diagram 2 shows the connection.

Diagram 2



The verbal "if then" of this diagram reads like this:

*If we strengthen the skills of teachers and staff, strengthen the skills of school leaders, ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of our system and have sufficient resources, then instruction will improve and student learning will increase.*

One limitation of this graphic is that it does not display the interplay possible between each of the four boxes. Improved skills of school leaders, for instance, often will lead to improved skills of teachers and staff. Certain resources can lead to greater alignment of the system. Improved teacher skills can lead to greater alignment. Think of these four boxes as a connected set of change efforts rather than the discrete boxes that appear on this page.

For each of these areas, I will describe the specific area where there is room for growth; improvement efforts may overlap from one strand to another.

## STRENGTHEN TEACHER SKILLS

The most direct route to improved learning is through the continuous development of teacher skills. We have many skilled teachers in Fairfield. Our student achievement results are very good. However, keeping teacher skills current is important because of the changes in the student population and expectations for student learning. Hiring the best and brightest is always a priority, but after hire, teachers need to continuously update their skills. For example, the demographics in Fairfield have changed over the past decade. The English Language Learner population is rising. Colleges and the workplace expect greater skill levels from our graduates than ten years ago. Technology continues to evolve, so teachers need to learn how to use instructional technology to improve student learning.

Another area for growth that relates not only to teacher skills but also to the other three focus areas is the analysis and use of student performance data, in particular by teams of teachers. We can make great strides in pinpointing where we need to improve student learning by looking at student performance data in a collaborative and systematic way. Our teachers need skills in collaboration and data analysis, timely access to meaningful data and the time to do this work well. Moreover, analysis of student performance data should be the driving force for the focus of professional development efforts.

## STRENGTHEN SCHOOL LEADER SKILLS

Teachers need support in improving instruction. Principals, assistant principals, headmasters, housemasters and curriculum leaders/liaisons play a critical role in assuring that instruction in each classroom is of the highest possible quality. There are virtually no instances in the literature where a school has made sizeable gains in student achievement without a solid school principal. School leaders provide the balance of support and accountability required to improve instruction.

Principals need a skill set in analyzing and taking action based on student performance data. They need to be able to develop school improvement plans based on student data and work with teams of teachers to enable them to work collaboratively in developing new strategies for improved learning. They also need to be able to articulate a shared vision of what good instruction looks like in the classroom, and they need to be able to give feedback to teachers, collectively and individually, that will encourage teachers to continue effective practices and change ineffective ones. They also need to know how to support teams of teachers as they struggle through this new process; collaboration is a learned skill.

## AN ALIGNED SYSTEM

This strand has many components; most of the issues that parents, teachers, principals, Board members and community members mentioned to me fall into this bucket. Words such as "equity," "consistency" and "fairness" were frequently used to describe some elements of the school system. In fact, aligning a system of 17 schools may be the central challenge facing us.

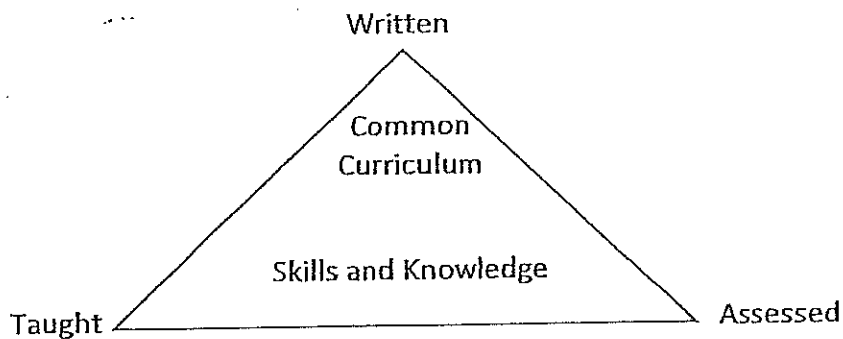
In the educational world, alignment can be thought of in two ways – so-called "horizontal" alignment and "vertical" alignment. Both are important to achieving our goal.

## HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT

This type of alignment means that there is a consistency in the educational program and resources across the same grade level and subject area. We have horizontal alignment when the curriculum being delivered in every second grade classroom across the district is consistent. We cannot expect students to master a rigorous instructional program (that is, our curriculum) if the written curriculum is not, in fact, the taught curriculum and the assessed curriculum. A teacher may be doing a great job of teaching and assessing a curriculum, but if it is not the one approved for that grade level or subject, we do not have alignment.

Alignment of assessment is a growth area for us. Common assessments are a good way to ensure consistent delivery of curriculum without constraining teacher flexibility in how they teach. Assessments must align to the written curriculum and the taught curriculum. Diagram 3 shows this relationship.

Diagram 3  
Curriculum Alignment



Horizontal alignment does not require identical teaching techniques or identical resources. Teachers need some latitude in their instructional styles as long as the approved curriculum is being implemented as designed. There are limits to the degree of variability, but consistency does not necessarily mean identical. One downside to a push for horizontal alignment is that it encroaches on some staff members freedom and, as such, can generate a negative reaction those who have been able to “do their own thing” with little thought for how it impacts learning across the school district.

Horizontal alignment can also relate to the equitable distribution of resources. Technology – both hardware and software – would be “Exhibit A” of this issue in Fairfield.

Responsibility for horizontal alignment often falls to district leaders, as it is their job to ensure the implementation of the instructional program system-wide. Principals can assure such alignment within their buildings, but the roles of curriculum leaders and central office leaders fall into this arena. Well-functioning grade level or subject area data teams can also bring about greater horizontal alignment within a school.

## VERTICAL ALIGNMENT

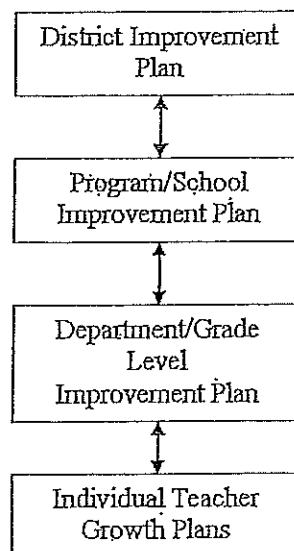
A system that is “vertically” aligned has a consistent program of instruction from grade to grade. There are no gaps in student knowledge from one grade to the next and there is no unnecessary duplication of curriculum. The growth area for Fairfield in this arena appears to be at two transition points – from fifth grade to sixth grade and from eighth grade to ninth grade. Some districts experience an issue from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten but at this point that seems to be less of a concern than the two mentioned above.

The real power of vertical alignment can be seen when improvement efforts at all levels of the system are consistent. For example, when the vision of what good classroom instruction looks like in the eyes of the superintendent, director of curriculum, curriculum leader, principal and teacher is aligned, there is a greater probability of full implementation. When teachers receive “mixed signals” about what effective instruction consists of, one will not get full implementation. For example, a teacher may get advice on instruction from her principal, reading consultant, curriculum leader or Director of Elementary Education. If all of these individuals are not “on the same page,” then the teacher is confused.

The same is true of improvement plans in general. In an aligned world, elements of the district’s improvement plan are evident in the improvement plans of the schools and in the individual improvement plans of grade levels, departments and teachers. Each of these improvement plans may differ because, if done well, they are based on student performance data specific to that teacher, grade level or school. Working toward a common process of analyzing data at the teacher, grade level, school and district level that leads to an alignment of improvement plans would concentrate our resources throughout the system on the most critical areas.

Diagram 4 shows the vertical alignment of improvement plans. The arrows indicate that information flows in both directions to inform our practice. For example, if “differentiating instruction” is a district-wide improvement strategy, evidence of this practice should be evident throughout the system. Conversely, evidence from the “ground up” – the individual teacher level – can and should inform department/grade level/school strategies.

Diagram 4



## RESOURCES

Without a certain level of resources, all of the skills and alignment work may be limited in its effectiveness. Resources can include class size, additional staff to support struggling or advanced learners, books, materials, technology, software, adequate facilities as well as community and parent resources. The relationship between resources and student achievement does hinge on staff trained to use them effectively, hence the emphasis on teacher and school leader skills. Without adequate resources, however, the best-laid plans for improvement may fall flat.

In an era of limited financial resources, we need to assess the "return on investment" of our resources. Again, the "return" needs to be measured in terms of improved student learning as the outcome. With limited dollars, for example, are we better off investing in technology or people? The answer is not obvious nor is the answer always binary. Without the technological resources, for example, to provide teachers and principals with real-time data about student performance, we cannot implement a solid program of student performance data analysis.

## A THEME

Concentrating our resources of time, energy and dollars into these four focus areas will yield the greatest impact on student learning. One theme across all four areas is the improved use of student performance data to drive our decision-making. For example:

- Implementing a district-and school-wide protocol in the use of student performance data to improve instruction and target services to children
- Implementing school improvement plans based on student performance data
- Implementing professional development for teachers based on student performance data
- The alignment of district, school, department, grade level and individual teacher objectives/goals based on student performance data

## CONCLUSIONS

The school system provides outstanding learning opportunities for students. To ensure that all students master our rigorous curriculum, we need to concentrate our change efforts in the area that will provide the greatest leverage to improve instruction. I have identified four main "lenses" through which to view our current and any proposed change initiatives.

The district does suffer from a case of "initiative fatigue." Sometimes this condition is caused by the district undertaking so many initiatives that none can be done well; sometimes it is caused by people not being able to understand how the many initiatives underway are tied to a bigger picture for change. I hope through this general framework for district improvement we may be able to tackle both parts of the problem. Change initiatives that do not directly and clearly address improvement in classroom instruction as outlined here can be phased out; at the same time, we can show how the remaining initiatives fit into the bigger structure by tying them directly to one of the four "lenses" outlined in this document.

Generally speaking, fewer change efforts done well are more effective than many change efforts done not as well. Concentrating the scarce resource of time in the areas where the “return” (in terms of student learning) on “investment” (in terms of time) is greatest is critical. Time is scarce because the day-to-day managing of a complex school system takes up a vast amount of teacher, school leader and district leader time. Carving out time to implement change initiatives is an important part of leading, but if the day-to-day managing of school begins to erode, then change efforts will be sidetracked. In addition, some change initiatives are required of the school district due to changes in state or federal law.

Despite these constraints, change is necessary. Before undertaking any new initiative, the decision-makers – whether they are the Board of Education, central office leaders, principals/headmasters, curriculum leaders, teachers – need to demand that the time invested in such an effort will likely have a significant and positive impact on improving instruction and therefore lead to our reaching our goal of ensuring that every student masters the skills and knowledge outlined in our rigorous instructional program.

Summary of Administrative Professional Development 2010-2011  
D. Title 6/14/2011

You may recall from my “District Improvement Strategy” that improvement in student learning comes primarily from improvement in instructional practice. To improve instructional practice in Fairfield I proposed concentrating on four areas: 1) strengthening teacher skills; 2) strengthening school leader skills; 3) alignment (horizontal and vertical); and 4) adequate resources. This document describes one of our major initiatives in the second area, strengthening school leader skills in the area of effective instructional practices.

The year began with a session in the summer of 2010 where the full administrative team, consisting of all district-level and school-level leaders, read and discussed Connecticut’s Common Core of Teaching (CCT). The CCT describes what Connecticut believes to be the attributes of high quality instruction. Each principal/headmaster then followed up with his/her faculty in the fall to introduce the CCT.

We then converted all of our K-12 Administrative Cabinet meetings, held once a month, from business meetings to professional development sessions. The purposes of these sessions were:

1. To develop a common understanding of what effective instructional practice looks like in the classroom across the entire school district (alignment).
2. To sharpen administrator skills in observations of classrooms to identify relevant evidence to assess classroom practices.
3. To be able to take the evidence from an observation and communicate it effectively to teachers using a common protocol based on best practices in adult feedback.
4. To assess a school’s strengths and areas of growth in the three areas of the instructional core – teachers, students, task – based on evidence gathered in classroom observations.

We engaged in the following activities this year:

- The full Administrative Cabinet watched a video of a lesson, gathered specific evidence from the video, shared perceptions of this evidence with colleagues, and worked toward a common understanding of the interpretation of the instruction. We developed a “CCT Short Form” to help administrators gather evidence in the classrooms and shared this form with teachers.
- We learned a protocol for communicating with teachers after an observation and practiced that protocol with colleague feedback.
- We observed a video lesson of a Fairfield teacher and watched the principal conduct a post-conference with the same teacher.
- We brought in sample tasks from Fairfield classrooms and assessed their quality according to the standards outlined in the CCT.
- In the fall, as part of my Entry Plan, I observed for a minimum of one hour in at least four classrooms in each school with the principal/headmaster and debriefed for a minimum of one hour on the evidence of effective instructional practices seen during

the visit, noting any patterns across all classrooms. If a teacher asked for feedback from me directly, I met with that teacher and modeled the post-conference protocol with the principal/headmaster observing this practice.

- In the spring, I repeated this procedure with administrators who were not involved in the fall round of observations (housemasters, curriculum leaders). Principals/headmasters who had done classroom observations with me in the fall were given the option of repeating the observations with different teachers or having me observe them implementing the post-conference meeting protocol and giving them feedback on it.
- Other members of the central office instructional leadership team participated in the observations in the fall and spring.
- All school leaders are using the "CCT Short Form" in the spring to visit as many classrooms as possible to gather evidence about instructional practice. Using the rubric, in consultation with staff, each school will develop a focus area for the coming year (called a "Problem of Practice"). The purpose of this exercise is not for individual teacher evaluation but to determine the "Problem of Practice" for the entire school.

Future work during 2011-2012 will involve the following activities:

- Continued observation of classrooms by the full Cabinet to sharpen administrators' skills in observing classrooms, gathering and interpreting evidence, and coming to common understanding of effective practices.
- Continued practice and feedback on post-conferencing with teachers after an observation.
- Continued focus on the attributes of a high quality task, coming to a common understanding of effective tasks.
- Each school will develop and implement a plan of action to improve instruction in the identified "Problem of Practice," and include it in the School Improvement Plans.
- Developing a protocol for colleague visits ("Instructional Rounds").
- Implementing colleague visits to other schools to observe instruction, focused on the school's "Problem of Practice."
- Revision of each school's plan of action based on colleague feedback and year-end observations of instructional practices.
- Engagement of teachers in classroom observations in each school and across the school district.

Improvement of instructional practice does not occur as a singular event. It happens over time in a culture where administrators and teachers are willing to put their practice "on the table" for others to see. We are fortunate in Fairfield to have administrators and teachers who have been willing to open their doors and let their colleagues observe their work and receive feedback on it.



**FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
2011-2013**

School \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Team Members \_\_\_\_\_

1. Narrative Analysis of Student Data [Student Data in Appendix]

- Celebrations
- 
- 
- 
- Challenges (identify needs)
- 
- 
- 
- 
- Hypothesize cause of these results
- 
- 
-

2. By level student achievement targets for June 2013

- Reading
- Writing
- Math

3. School achievement targets for June 2013:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

4. Theory of Action Underlying This Plan

## SCHOOL-WIDE STRATEGIES

<b>FOCUSED STRATEGY</b> (addresses the problem of practice and are limited in number and high leverage)	<b>ADULT ACTIONS</b> (include persons responsible, the timeline and how actions will be monitored)	<b>EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION</b> (identify student achievement measures and timeline)	<b>SPECIFIC SUPPORT NEEDED</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			

**GRADE LEVEL OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIES**

<p><b>FOCUSED STRATEGY</b> (addresses the problem of practice and are limited in number and high leverage)</p>	<p><b>ADULT ACTIONS</b> (include persons responsible, the timeline and how actions will be monitored)</p>	<p><b>EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION</b> (identify student achievement measures and timeline)</p>	<p><b>SPECIFIC SUPPORT NEEDED</b></p>
<p>2.</p>			
<p>2,</p>			
<p>3.</p>			

**STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DATA TEAMS**

DOMAIN	STANDARDS	NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
<p><b>School Improvement Plan</b></p> <p><b>Domain Overall Rating:</b> (write 1,2,3 or 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan establishes a school target for each student outcome indicator identified by the District. Each target is based upon a school's analysis of its own data. The school can defend its choice of each target. Multiple indicators of success are included.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritized areas of strategic adult work have been identified in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and are limited in number.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions described in the plan have a high degree of leverage (positive effect of multiple outcomes).</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For each area of strategic adult work, a detailed action plan has been developed that includes key strategies, timelines, results indicators, persons responsible and other relevant information.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional Development associated with key adult strategies is included in the plan.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers and administrators provide each other feedback on the implementation of initiatives in the SIP.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher leadership is present in the development and implementation of the SIP.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers and administrators work collaboratively to plan and implement PD consistent with the SIP.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers and administrators routinely observe classrooms to monitor instructional improvements.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A copy of the plan is distributed to each staff member and is discussed regularly. The plan is posted on the school's web site.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<p><b>Membership</b></p> <p><b>Domain Overall Rating:</b> (write 1,2,3 or 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal / Headmaster and other building administrators are regularly attending members of the team.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary – representatives from each grade level.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondary – representatives from each department.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-classroom staff members are part of the team</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4

<b>Structure</b>								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings are conducted at least once per month.</li> <li>Meetings are of sufficient length to ensure monitoring of implementation of all aspects of the plan.</li> <li>An agenda with appropriate data is sent to all members in advance of the meeting.</li> <li>A clear process for data collection and analysis, decision making, follow up and feedback has been identified and is followed</li> <li>Data used in analysis is in the SIP.</li> <li>The team uses relevant data (both adult action data and student outcome data) to determine the effectiveness of actions designed to achieve the identified student outcomes.</li> <li>The team modifies the plan in response to the data and tracks each change</li> <li>The team coordinates and may direct the work of the Instructional Data Teams.</li> <li>Minutes are sent to all members following the meeting.</li> <li>Roles are clearly defined (Chair, recorder, etc.) and rotate throughout the year.</li> <li>Norms are developed and followed.</li> <li>The chair facilitates the meeting and all members reinforce the norms.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4			
<b>Domain Overall Rating:</b>		1	2	3	4			
(write 1,2,3 or 4)		1	2	3	4			
<b>Process</b>								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings begin with a review of the prior meeting's commitments.</li> <li>There is participation by every member with honest dialogue on key issues.</li> <li>All members come prepared with appropriate data.</li> <li>The discussion follows the agenda (focused, time-limited, on task).</li> <li>The discussion centers on what the group can control.</li> <li>Discussion is largely supported by evidence and data.</li> <li>Team serves as a problem-solving group as obstacles arise.</li> <li>Decisions made by the group are supported by all members.</li> <li>At the end of each meeting, next steps are clearly identified and a timeline is developed for follow up. All members agree to take certain actions</li> <li>Those responsible for each action plan are clearly identified</li> <li>All members feel safe to admit weaknesses or challenge the view point of others.</li> <li>Group members are attentive, use positive body language and dignify each others' contributions.</li> <li>The team coordinates and may direct the work of the Instructional Data Teams.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4			
<b>Domain Overall Rating:</b>		1	2	3	4			
(write 1,2,3 or 4)		1	2	3	4			

**Fairfield Public Schools  
Team Observation Form**

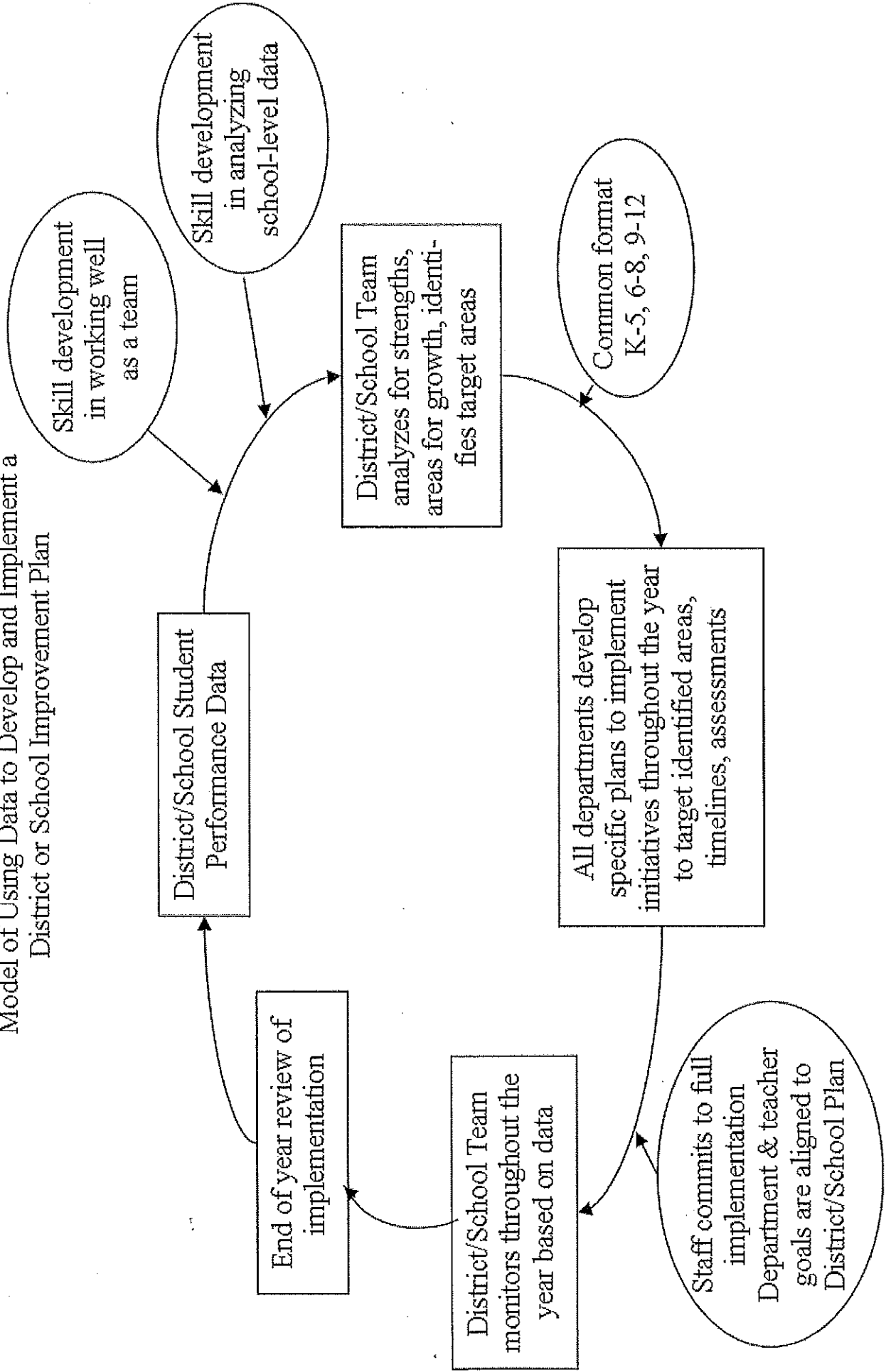
Name of Team & Size: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>EVIDENCE</b>
Everyone participates, no one dominates.	
Norms are enforced by everyone, not just facilitator. Facilitation is rotated among group members.	
Meetings accomplish what they set out to accomplish.	
Meetings end with a commitment by all members to do something by a certain time.	
Discussion about improved student learning focuses on changes in adult actions (“agency”).	
Meetings often begin with a review of prior commitments.	
Discussion is respectful but avoids the “land of nice” syndrome. Members are direct and honest in a respectful way. Challenging the view of others is acceptable.	
Discussion often flows among group members themselves without going through the facilitator.	
Members’ comments often build upon each other’s comments.	
Psychological safety is evidenced by members’ willingness to put their practice on the table, admit weaknesses.	
Members feel that they both contribute to the team but also take away learning from the team.	

**Model of Using Data to Develop and Implement a District or School Improvement Plan**





STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL DATA TEAMS

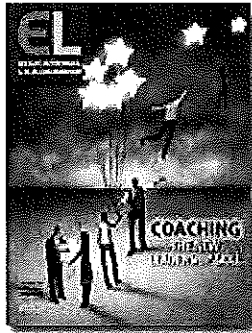
DOMAIN	STANDARDS	NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
<b>Membership</b> Domain Overall Rating: (write 1,2,3 or 4)	<b>Elementary Level:</b> • Organized by grade level (all grade level teachers) • Appropriate support staff included (e.g. language arts specialist, social worker)	1	2	3	4
	<b>Secondary Level:</b> • Organized by those teaching common courses • Appropriate support staff included • Each Instructional Data Team selects a representative to the School Data Team.	1	2	3	4
	• Meetings begin with a review of the prior meeting's commitments.	1	2	3	4
	• The discussion follows the agenda (focused, time limited, on task).	1	2	3	4
	• All members come prepared with appropriated data.	1	2	3	4
	• Student achievement data is used to identify areas of strength and where improvement is needed.	1	2	3	4
	• Issues are clearly described and limited in scope.	1	2	3	4
	• Instructional strategies are designed to address the goal and measure progress.	1	2	3	4
	• Strategies are implemented for a specific period of time.	1	2	3	4
	• Team members consult formally and informally about the strategy and implementation.	1	2	3	4
<b>Process</b> Domain Overall Rating: (write 1,2,3 or 4)	• Team members administer an assessment to measure the effect of the strategy on the student(s).	1	2	3	4
	• Teams, at regularly prescribed intervals (e.g., every 2 weeks), evaluate the effectiveness of the selected strategy through the results of the assessment.	1	2	3	4
	• If the data indicates minimal progress toward the goal, the team analyzes and revises the strategy or selects a different strategy.	1	2	3	4
	• If the team determines the strategy is successful, go on to another instructional issue or area needing improvement.	1	2	3	4
	• The Team periodically returns to previous issue to be sure learning is sustained.	1	2	3	4
	• At the end of each meeting, next steps are clearly identified and a timeline is developed for follow up. All members agree to take certain actions.	1	2	3	4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those responsible for each action plan are clearly identified.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is participation by every member with honest dialogue on key issues.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The discussion centers on what the group can control.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The discussion is largely supported by evidence and data.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team serves as a problem-solving group as obstacles arise.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decisions made by the group are supported by all members.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All members feel safe to admit weaknesses or challenge the view point of others.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group members are attentive, use positive body language and dignify each others' contributions.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Instructional Data Team makes periodic reports to the School Data Team relative to progress, process and issues; takes unresolved instructional issues to the School Data Team for advice and direction or possible referral to another level.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings are conducted at least once every 2 weeks.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings are of sufficient length to ensure monitoring of implementation of all aspects of the plan.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An agenda is sent to all members in advance of the meeting.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clear process for data collection and analysis, decision making, follow up and feedback has been identified and is followed.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data used in analysis is in alignment with the SIP.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team uses relevant data (both adult action data and student outcome data) to determine the effectiveness of actions designed to achieve the identified student outcomes.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team modifies the plan in response to the data and tracks each change.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes are sent to all members following the meeting.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles are clearly defined (Chair, recorder, etc.) and rotate throughout the year.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The chair facilitates the meeting and all group members reinforce the norms.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norms are developed and followed.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4

**Structure**

**Domain Overall Rating:**

(write 1,2,3 or 4)




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## Learning from Instructional Rounds

Elizabeth A. City

**When teachers conduct instructional rounds, they focus on why a problem of practice persists schoolwide—and on what they can do about it.**

How do we improve our collective teaching practice? How do we ensure that every classroom is a place of rich and valuable learning for all students? And who's responsible for doing so?

Over the last several years, my colleagues and I, in collaboration with educators across the United States, Canada, and Australia, have tried to answer these questions.<sup>1</sup> The model we've developed to improve instructional practice is based on medical rounds, the primary way that doctors learn and improve their practice. We call the approach *instructional rounds*.

The practice, which began with administrators, has become increasingly popular in schools. Teachers are usually the most enthusiastic rounds participants, leading the next evolution of the practice.

### What Are Instructional Rounds?

Instructional rounds are a disciplined way for educators to work together to improve instruction (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009). The practice combines three common elements of improvement: classroom observation, an improvement strategy, and a network of educators. Many educators currently use one or more of these elements, often with some success. In our own work, my colleagues and I have found that it's the *combination* of elements that's most powerful. We have also found that it's hard to dislodge familiar habits and behaviors that serve different purposes, the most ingrained of which are supervision and evaluation.

Instructional rounds contrast with supervision and evaluation on a number of dimensions, the first of which is learning (see fig. 1, p. 39). Rounds are an inquiry process. People doing rounds should expect to learn something themselves. In supervision and evaluation, only the person *being* observed is expected to learn. I think of this as the difference between looking through a window (supervision and evaluation) and holding up a mirror (rounds).

<b>Figure 1. Instructional Rounds Versus Supervision and Evaluation</b>	<b>Instructional Rounds</b>	<b>Supervision and Evaluation</b>
<i>Learning stance</i>	Inquiry: Genuinely want to learn something ourselves Main learners: The observers	Informative: Genuinely want someone else to learn something Main learner: The observed
<i>Unit of improvement</i>	Meant to improve the collective (school, system)	Meant to improve the individual
<i>Accountability</i>	Lateral (peer-to-peer)	Positional (top-down)
<i>Output</i>	Next level of work, collective commitments	Evaluative feedback, prescriptions for next steps
<i>Primary focus in the classroom</i>	The instructional core, especially the students and the tasks they're engaged in	The teacher

Participants in rounds, particularly teachers, emphasize the learning they do as observers. "My teachers schooled me pretty quickly on this—you don't learn anything by being observed, only by observing," said John Roberts, assistant director at Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School in Lowell, Massachusetts, after introducing rounds to his faculty.

Rounds are not about "fixing" individual teachers. Rounds are about understanding what's happening in classrooms, how we as a system produce those effects, and how we can move closer to producing the learning we want to see. This focus on "we" means that peers learn to hold one another accountable, individually and collectively. For rounds to accelerate improvement, educators need a protocol for taking next steps that they've committed to on their own. They don't rely on someone with formal authority to enforce agreements or on others to comply with mandates. In the California Rural Network, for example, superintendents do follow-up visits with one another after rounds visits. They say this follow-up visit from a peer helps them take action amid multiple competing priorities.

Rounds are fundamentally descriptive and analytic, not evaluative. At no point in rounds do we declare what we see to be "good" or "bad" or something we "like" or "don't like." Observers don't tell the observed what to do next to improve. However, observers *do* think about "the next level of work" or what the school or district could do to make progress in a problem area.

Finally, because rounds are about the instructional core, when my colleagues and I are in classrooms we focus on the interactions among teachers, students, and content. Effective supervision and evaluation, of course, pay attention to these things as well. However, educators consistently say that one of their early changes in practice as a result of participating in rounds is a shift of attention from the teacher to the students and the tasks they're engaged in.

## How Do You Do Instructional Rounds?

Although educators adapt rounds to their purpose and context, the essential practice looks the same and relies heavily on protocol: You gather a group of colleagues who will meet together over time (that is, you form a *network*); you define a problem of practice connected to your improvement strategy; you visit classrooms in small groups; you

debrief after the observation; you identify next levels of work and build the group's relevant knowledge and skills; and you repeat this process often.

## **Assemble a Network**

Some networks are composed of peers (all superintendents, principals, or teachers). Others have cross-functional groups (teachers and administrators together or multiple roles across a district). Some educators build on existing networks and incorporate rounds into their practice; others form new networks for rounds. Some are intentional about who is in the network (for example, staff members in shared content areas or in cross-content areas that focus on a shared issue); others are pragmatic (for example, those who have a common planning period do rounds together). The same group meets over time, giving members the opportunity to build a trusting, respectful community that pushes itself hard and develops a common language and understanding of learning and teaching. Networks typically range from 8 to 30 members.

## **Define the Problem of Practice**

A problem of practice is something the school cares about, feels stuck on, and wants to understand more deeply. A problem of practice focuses on instruction, is observable and actionable, connects to a broader strategy of improvement, and is high leverage (City et al., 2009). See "Common Problems of Practice" (p. 40) for examples. Schools vary in their process for determining a problem of practice. The process works best when it's connected to ongoing improvement work and is based on data. A school might convene its instructional leadership team and ask the following questions: Where do we feel stuck? Where are we struggling? How do we know we're struggling? Which situation do we need help collecting data on and thinking about?

Schools sometimes invite the whole faculty to identify a problem of practice; sometimes they work with their leadership team to identify a problem. And sometimes, frankly, they pluck the problems of practice out of thin air, with just the principal deciding what the "problem" is. I don't recommend that option, as it usually results in little improvement and in data that teachers aren't all that interested in.

Ballarat Clarendon College, a K–12 school in Victoria, Australia, started with this problem of practice:

We've noticed that our students are more often engaged in tasks that involve remembering and understanding than in tasks that involve analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Some students aren't getting enough opportunities to practice higher-order thinking skills and to take an active role in the learning process.

At Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, teachers thought that students struggled with intellectual curiosity. Students sat in class "absorbing" and didn't ask questions. After examining this problem of practice in rounds, teachers decided that the level of the task assigned might have something to do with students' lack of intellectual curiosity, so they shifted the problem of practice to be about the level of the task and the level of teacher questioning.

## **Observe in Classrooms**

The network divides into small groups of approximately four people. Each group typically visits four classrooms, staying 20–25 minutes in each. Observers don't have rubrics to guide them because they're gathering descriptive data rather than assessing against a rubric. However, they usually do have focus questions related to the problem of practice, such as, What are students doing and saying? What's the teacher doing and saying? What's the task? They also question students about what they're working on, what they do when they don't understand something, and how they know whether their work is good or great.

The problem of practice acts as a filter. In classrooms, observers don't pay attention to all the things they think are important. For example, if the problem of practice is about higher-order thinking skills, observers try to ignore how well students are behaving, what is or isn't on the walls, or whether the teacher wrote the objective on the board. Observers also don't do an implementation check on a given strategy. They're detectives, not inspectors. They try to

unlock the mystery of why the school is stuck, why this problem of practice persists, and what might help the school get unstuck.

Between classroom visits, observers don't chat about what they saw or what they thought about what they saw. They save that for the formal debrief.

## Debrief

Lowell Middlesex Academy assistant director John Roberts finds the rounds protocol crucial. "The reason we follow this protocol," he notes, "is that it separates us from the practice and keeps us from being the crazy, judgmental human beings we are." The debriefing protocol moves in steps from description to analysis to prediction and leads participants into identifying the next level of work.

*Describe.* In the description phase, the various observation groups come together to share the evidence they collected related to the problem of practice. Evidence is most helpful when it's specific and descriptive as opposed to judgmental or general. Gathering and stating specific, descriptive evidence are learned skills that educators can help one another with. When you hear something judgmental—such as, "The teacher talked too much" or "The questions were mostly low level"—ask "What's the evidence?" When you hear something general—such as "The teacher asked lots of questions"—ask for specificity, for instance, "What were some specific questions the teacher asked?"

*Analyze.* Having built the evidentiary foundation for a strong discussion, observation groups move into the analysis phase, looking for patterns across the evidence and noting exceptions to the patterns. Patterns might include the following:

- Teachers ask questions that require one- or two-word answers, and students respond with one or two words.
- Students sit in groups, yet work individually.
- The pattern of interaction is teacher–student–teacher, with teachers initiating the conversation.

We pause at this point in the debriefing session so each group can share the patterns it has seen. Often, a distinct pattern will emerge across the school—that tasks are low level, for example—but sometimes groups see different patterns in a certain grade level, content area, or classroom.

*Predict.* Next, the protocol asks, "If you were a student in these classes today and you did everything the teacher asked you to do, what would you know and be able to do?" This question doesn't ask what you think teachers *hope* students will learn or what the objectives written on the board are, but what students would actually learn if they completed the tasks given to them. For example, observers might predict that students would be able to follow directions, recall information, or complete mathematics problems if they had the formula for the problems in front of them.

## Identify the Next Level of Work

Taking into account all the evidence, what do we now understand about this stuck place? How can the school focus its energy and resources to make progress on the problem of practice? What new knowledge and skills might teachers need, and how might the school support that learning?

For example, a rounds visit might reveal that in a school whose students struggle with higher-order thinking, teachers typically give students fairly low-level tasks. The next level of work might be for the teachers to see these data together—for example, teachers might collect all the tasks given on a certain day and then assess them using a framework like Bloom's taxonomy.

On the basis of their assessment, the teachers might identify the support they need, which might involve having more time to design tasks together or receiving training in Bloom's taxonomy. At the same time, school leadership might not only reorganize planning time to make it possible for teachers to design tasks together, but also look at how challenging the tasks are that *adults* are being asked to complete during professional development and other

meetings. The school might stop having informational meetings where teachers are just called on to listen and, instead, create sessions where teachers are challenged as learners.

Different networks experiment with different ways of formulating the next level of work. Some brainstorm action steps for this week, next month, and by the end of the year. Others generate reflective questions to prompt further thinking, such as, In a differentiated classroom, what would teachers and students be doing? or How do teachers know that their students understand? At Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, teachers create commitment cards and post the cards in their classrooms. For example, one might read, "Ask a question at the evaluation level at the beginning of class."

Inevitably, rounds bring to the surface areas of need that can inform professional development. In Boston Public Schools, for example, high school principals worked together to generate a common definition of rigor but realized they didn't all agree on what it looked like in the classroom. Through rounds, they identified a districtwide pattern of tasks focused on remembering, understanding, and, from time to time, applying. The next level of work was engaging teachers in rounds and developing a deeper understanding of rigor.

As a result, the central office designed a course on rigor and the practice of rounds. Teachers learned that students with low skills do not need low-level tasks—rather, they need supports to successfully engage with high-level tasks. They also learned to compare the stated task with the enacted task, which may be more low-level than expected; students may simply be doing more of something or following the teacher's example rather than really using their minds. Teachers took the course, learned how to do rounds, and will facilitate rounds focused on rigor as a problem of practice in their schools.

For Judith Blanco, district instructional coach for Boston's high schools, rounds are a "cyclical process that ties your whole school improvement plan, your professional development, and your rounds together, all informing each other." Because the process is cyclical, she says, "rounds shouldn't be one-time events." Melissa Chen, science teacher at Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, agrees: "We don't see rounds as an extra thing—they're part of what we do." At Lowell Middlesex Academy, teachers do rounds once a week. Teachers at Ballarat Clarendon College do rounds once every two weeks. Other networks do rounds once a month. Frequency matters.

## Why Do Instructional Rounds?

Rounds are time-consuming, complex, and challenging. So why bother? Several educators I asked suggested the following reasons:

- *To take improvement to the next level.* In the California Rural Network, school districts had been engaged in improvement through Reading First and other efforts. As a result, they were experiencing improvements in student achievement. They believed they could take student and adult learning to the next level, but they weren't sure how to do it. Rounds have helped them build on their earlier improvement efforts.
- *To build a common understanding of effective learning and teaching.* Educators in the California Rural Network think that rounds are a valuable way to explore the following questions: Do we know what effective instruction looks like? Do we recognize it when we see it? Do we agree?
- *To reduce variability.* Educators at Ballarat Clarendon College do rounds "because we know there's a significant difference in levels of instruction among classrooms." They think rounds will help them reduce variability by focusing on tasks in classrooms and getting shared commitments about how to improve.
- *To focus the work.* Melissa Chen says that rounds help Lowell Middlesex Academy focus: "There are so many things we want to improve, and it helps to put more of our energy in one place, to choose one problem a year that we want to look at."
- *To put educators in charge of their own learning.* Judith Blanco sees rounds as building on Boston's previous coaching work. According to Blanco, it's "a way of getting teachers to observe one another's practice in a

nonevaluative way. It's a process and structure to make that happen." Connie Tate of the California Rural Network explains,

We're trying to build collective efficacy. It's really behavior modification: Tell me what to do, and I'm going to resist it, but give me time, let me do it and see the results...and I'll change my behavior.

- *To provide data and inform professional development.* Lowell Middlesex Academy uses rounds to inform professional development in a targeted way and create a feedback loop for teachers: "It's hard to plan professional development if we don't all agree on what we're seeing in our classrooms." Similarly, educators at one Boston high school said,

The data from instructional rounds give us a more complete picture of student learning and bluntly show whether professional development has had an impact on student performance—[and] whether we have adequately addressed the problem of practice.

Ultimately, educators choose to do rounds because they find them a powerful way of continually informing and improving their practice. One educator in the California Rural Network captured her experience:

We're finally having conversations about instructional practice. I've learned more about myself as a teacher and about quality instruction in one day of instructional rounds than in five years of professional development.

## **It's in Our Hands**

Done poorly or briefly as just another initiative, rounds, like any improvement effort, will have little effect. At worst, poorly done rounds will suggest that we educators are incapable of improving our own practice. However, done well, in a way that is sustained, and integrated with an improvement strategy, rounds offer the opportunity for educators to show ourselves and others what we're capable of as professionals and to develop learning environments in which all students can succeed.

### **Common Problems of Practice**

Are students engaged in high-level or low-level tasks? Do teachers ask high-level or low-level questions?

Are students able to articulate their thinking in writing?

Are students able to transfer learning from one content area or grade level to another?

Is students' understanding in mathematics conceptual or only procedural?

Are students active or passive participants in class?

Are some students—such as students with special needs, English language learners, boys, or girls—performing as well as they might? If not, what does this look like in the classroom?

Do teachers do most of the talking and thinking in the classroom?

Do teachers enact a high-level curriculum in a low-level way?

How do teachers know what students know?

How do students know the quality of their work?

What role do students play in assessment?

How do students talk with one another about classwork?



## Reference

City, E. A., Elmore, R. F., Fiarman, S. E., & Teitel, L. (2009). *Instructional rounds in education: A network approach to improving learning and teaching*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> We build on the early work of Tony Alvarado, Elaine Fink, and colleagues in New York City District 2 and of Andrew Lachman, Richard Elmore, and colleagues in the Superintendents' Network of the Connecticut Center for School Change.

**Elizabeth A. City** is executive director of the Doctor of Education Leadership Program and lecturer on education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is coauthor, with Richard Elmore, Sarah Fiarman, and Lee Teitel, of *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning* (Harvard Education Press, 2009) and coauthor, with Rachel Curtis, of *Strategy in Action: How School Systems Can Support Powerful Learning and Teaching* (Harvard Education Press, 2009).

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September 15, 2011 Administrative Cabinet Professional Development  
Notes

1. Review Commitments from August Workshop

- Establish and implement a School Improvement Team process as described in the standards. Using or modifying an existing team is fine.
- Develop and implement a School Improvement Plan using the (modified) template according to a timeline agreeable to the supervisor for your level.
- Using the standards and your self-evaluation of your school's practices, identify one or more areas for improvement throughout the year and include in your professional growth plan.

There is some messiness about our journey through School Improvement. Each school is in a developmentally different stage based on the Standards we examined in August. One of the principles in the "Instructional Rounds" book is that we get better at the work by actually doing it. In this case, we will get better at School Improvement (and all of its attendant parts) by doing it.

2. Problem of Practice

Developing a Problem of Practice requires us to admit that not everything is perfect. We are admitting that our present practices are not always getting us the results we want. I realize there is a risk in doing so. It is my belief that if we make our private practice public then we can improve it. This is a culture change for schools and school districts.

Once a Problem of Practice has been identified, it becomes part of the School Improvement Plan under the "Whole School" banner. You work with staff to 1) identify and "name" the Problem; 2) develop some actions you, collectively, believe will address the Problem of Practice; 3) implement these actions; and 4) identify indicators that your actions have improved the Problem of Practice. Instructional Rounds visits will focus on your Problem of Practice, as visitors will be focusing their time in the classrooms looking for evidence related to your Problem of Practice.

Standards for an effective Problem of Practice:

Is your Problem of Practice:

- focused on elements of the CCT/instructional core? (teachers, students, task)?
- directly observable in the classroom?
- actionable (within our control, can be improved)?
- connected to a broader strategy of improvement (school, level, system)?
- based on data/evidence, not just hunches (student learning data, classroom observations)?

- “high leverage” (if improved, would we be likely to make a significant difference in student learning)?
- something that you are grappling with (maybe have tried to improve before)?
- sufficiently specific that it would allow observers to focus on it when in the classroom?
- include some context for others (e.g., history of under-performance in a certain area, have worked on it before with limited success)?

If you can answer “yes” to these questions, you have developed a Problem of Practice that is ready for the next steps in the process.

### 3. Theory of Action

Your School Improvement Plan, which includes addressing your Problem of Practice, should be based on an overall strategy. This strategy is called your Theory of Action.

Elements of a Theory of Action: (“What’s your strategy?”)

Theories of Action are developed by the leader. They can be developed with input from staff, trusted colleagues or supervisors, but ultimately it is “your” Theory of Action. You need to be able to stand up in front of a group (parents, teachers, supervisors, etc.) and say, “This is my strategy for how we can improve.”

Theories of Action are specific to the individual leader, the school and the culture/history of the organization. We all have these in our heads. It’s a matter of making them explicit, sharing them and using them to determine the actions you will undertake to improve. Some people find it easier to think about improvement efforts already underway and ask the question: Why am I doing this? How will this improve student learning?

A Theory of Action:

- Describes a causal relationship between improvement efforts and improved student learning
- Is a series of if/then statements, the end result of which is improved student learning
- Can be proven or disproven over time and therefore is subject to continuous revision, especially as “missing links” in the chain are identified
- Undergirds improvement efforts; it is not a specific year-by-year set of tasks

There is no “right” or “wrong” Theory of Action.

I have one for the school system:

- *If we work effectively in teams across all levels of the organization to examine system, school and individual student progress, and if we create a culture where individuals regularly share effective practices and if we regularly support and supervise teachers in*

*implementing effective classroom practices, then teachers will improve their instructional expertise and student learning will improve.*

- *If we improve the instructional leadership capacity of school and district leaders, then they will be better able to identify effective instructional practices, help teachers improve their practices through support and accountability and this improved instructional practice will lead to improved student learning.*
- *If we provide our staff and students with appropriate levels of educational resources (human, time and material) and if they use these resources effectively, then student learning will improve.*
- *If we ensure that a rigorous, comprehensive instructional program is consistently delivered across all schools and grade levels with alignment between the written, taught and assessed curriculum, then instruction will be of consistently high quality and student learning will improve.*

D. Title

9/15/2011

**Fairfield Public Schools**  
**Food Service Program**

JUN 12 2012

2011 - 2012

**Accomplishments**

For the 2011-2012 school year we continued to work towards our primary goals of providing healthy food choices to students that meet USDA requirements, and still appeal to students. As a self-sustaining program, it is critical that our program is sensitive to student preferences while providing these healthy choices. We were able to make progress towards achieving each of these goals. Provided below is a summary of the specific successful ways in which we worked towards meeting them.

**Emphasis on Quality Ingredients and Preparation**

- Introduced more "Foods from Scratch" meals at all schools. Some examples of meals from scratch are Minestrone Bean soup, Corn Chowder, Lasagna, Vegetarian Bean Chili, Mock Pizza, and Stuffed Peppers. These meals help reduce the number of processed and preserved food products used in meal preparation.
- We are continuously researching food items with improved nutritional value. This year we have been able to purchase more reduced sodium and more whole grain products than in prior years. We continue to focus on incorporating these quality ingredients in meal preparation.
- The Food Services Department participated in the annual Fuel for Learning Partnership Food Expo at Warde High School in March. We provided samples of our nut-free granola, 3 bean vegetarian chili and fruity coleslaw – all of which are made from scratch.

**Emphasis on Vegetables as Part of a Healthy Diet**

- The Fairfield Public Schools took the Veggie Pledge, a program sponsored by Fuel for Learning Partnership. As part of the Veggie Pledge, we offered monthly vegetable samples to all students which included escarole, eggplant, mushrooms, asparagus, and spaghetti squash. Jumbo posters were hung in each cafeteria to provide students with fun facts and nutritional information about each vegetable. This helps encourage students to make healthier choices, introduces them to new foods, and expands the options available for lunches.
- Food Services collaborated with Fuel for Learning Partnership on an Iron Chef Contest. Students voted for vegetarian recipes prepared by local chefs including Chef Wayne Uccellini, cafeteria manager at Osborn Hill Elementary School. The winning recipe, "Cinch Sliders" was later featured on our school lunch menu in December.

**Emphasis on the Environmental Sustainability**

- Beginning this year the Food Service Program introduced new biodegradable bagasse lunch trays made of sugar cane, which have replaced the Styrofoam lunch trays. During the annual Fuel for Learning Partnership Food Expo, we displayed our new biodegradable lunch tray that is in use at all of our schools as well as the biodegradable water bottles we sell at all schools.

## **Improvement and Expansion of Facilities and Services**

- Renovations to the kitchens at Fairfield Woods Middle School and Stratfield School were completed.
- We expanded our lunch service to include students at the Alternative High School.
- The Free and Reduced Lunch Application posted on the Food Services webpage has been translated into Spanish and Portuguese.
- This school year we upgraded our Point of Sale computer system to a newer version that allows for faster communication between Central Office and the schools as well as enhanced reports. In order to complete this upgrade, computers in the cafeterias were replaced.
- We use an on-line payment service called MyPaymentsPlus (formerly Mealpayplus) that allows parents/guardians to prepay for meals and to monitor their child's food purchases and account balances. We are currently negotiating a lower fee for parents to promote use of the system.
- We conducted a survey of elementary students, secondary school students, and parents this spring. Survey responses indicated that parents and/or students wanted less processed foods, more made from scratch meals, better quality, tastier food, more fruits and vegetables, and a salad bar.

## **Meeting USDA Standards**

- Food Services is applying for the bronze level award of the Healthier US School Challenge, sponsored by the USDA, for all of our elementary schools.
- At the Fuel for Learning Partnership Food Expo, we promoted the USDA dietary guidelines with handouts, pencils, and stickers. We presented a PowerPoint of our school lunches with an emphasis on how they address the new dietary guidelines.

**2012 - 2013**

## **Goals**

1. Implement the new USDA meal pattern at all schools and educate students and parents on the new meal pattern requirements. Promote the benefits of the new meals and encourage them to purchase the most nutritious meal.
2. Constantly monitor changes in products available with improved nutritional value.
3. Engage the services of consultant(s) with expertise in organizational food service programs to address survey results, i.e., made from scratch recipes, and tastier, quality meals, etc.
4. Feature whole grains, fruits and vegetables through monthly sample days.
5. Research and implement several forms of communication to improve distribution of program information to parents and students and offer various methods of communicating with the food service program.

**Fairfield Public Schools  
Fairfield, Connecticut  
Food and Nutrition Services**

**To:** Dr. David Title and Board of Education Members  
**From:** Joann D. Fitzpatrick, Manager of Food and Nutrition Services  
**Date:** June 7, 2012  
**Re:** New Federal Meal Pattern

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Beginning July 1, 2012, there are new federal standards for school meals designed to improve the health and nutrition of students across the nation. This is the first time in fifteen years the standards have been raised by the federal government.

The final standards include:

- A large increase in vegetables and fruits. Instead of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup vegetable and/or fruit as now required, vegetables and fruits must each be served every day.
- At grades K-5 and 6-8,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup vegetables must be served per day and at grades 9-12, one cup vegetables per day. There are weekly subgroups of vegetables that must be served. Fruits must be served daily -  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup for grades K-5, 6-8 and 1 cup for 9-12.
- Offer vs. serve presently allows students to reject any 2 of the 5 meal items. The new pattern requires that students must take at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of vegetable or fruit as one of the 3 items.
- Half of all grains must be whole grain. There are minimum and maximum grain servings per week.
- Offering daily at least two milk choices. Flavored milks must be fat free. White milk must be 1% lowfat.
- There are minimum and maximum protein servings. For ex. K-5 the daily minimum is 1 oz, the weekly range is 8-10 oz.
- There are 3 grade ranges (K-5; 6-9; 9-12) with weekly calorie minimums and maximums.
- There are no sodium targets for next school year. They will begin the following year.
- No trans-fat unless naturally occurring.

Note: Saturated fat must be 10% or less which is the same as the present pattern.

The USDA developed the new standards based on recommendations from a panel of experts convened by the Institute of Medicine and updated based on changes from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

In addition to the updated meal standards, there is an additional 6 cents per meal funding increase to schools, and pricing standards to ensure revenues from non-federal sources (meal prices) are properly aligned with costs.

The final nutrition standards were released in January 2012 and will be phased in over a three-year period, starting in 2012-2013. There is such an enormous change in the regulations I've attached a chart for your reference which outlines the differences between the current and new regulations.



Comparison of Current and New Regulatory Requirements under Final Rule “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs” Jan. 2012

<b>National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern</b>		
<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Current Requirements K-12</b>	<b>New Requirements K-12</b>
Fruit and Vegetables	½ - ¾ cup of fruit and vegetables combined per day	¾ - 1 cup of vegetables <u>plus</u> ½ -1 cup of fruit per day  Note: Students are allowed to select ½ cup fruit or vegetable under OVS.
Vegetables	No specifications as to type of vegetable subgroup	Weekly requirement for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dark green</li> <li>• red/orange</li> <li>• beans/peas (legumes)</li> <li>• starchy</li> <li>• other (as defined in 2010 Dietary Guidelines)</li> </ul>
Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA)	1.5 – 2 oz eq. (daily minimum)	Daily minimum and weekly ranges:  Grades K-5: 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-10 oz weekly)  Grades 6-8 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (9-10 oz weekly)  Grades 9-12 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (10-12 oz weekly)
Grains	8 servings per week (minimum of 1 serving per day)	Daily minimum and weekly ranges:  Grades K-5: 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-9 oz weekly)  Grades 6-8 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-10 oz weekly)  Grades 9-12 : 2 oz eq. min. daily (10-12 oz weekly)
Whole Grains	Encouraged	At least half of the grains must be whole grain-rich beginning July 1, 2012. Beginning July 1, 2014, all grains must be whole grain rich.
Milk	1 cup  Variety of fat contents allowed; flavor not restricted	1 cup  Must be fat-free(unflavored/flavored) or 1% low fat (unflavored)

Comparison of Current and New Regulatory Requirements under Final Rule “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs” Jan. 2012

<b>School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern</b>		
<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Current Requirements K-12</b>	<b>New Requirements K-12</b>
Fruit	½ cup per day (vegetable substitution allowed)	1 cup per day (vegetable substitution allowed) Note: Quantity required SY 2014-15. Students are allowed to select ½ cup of fruit under OVS.
Grains and Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA)	2 grains, or 2 meat/meat alternates, or 1 of each per day	Daily min. and weekly ranges for grains:  Grades K-5: 1 oz eq. min. daily (7-10 oz weekly)  Grades 6-8 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-10 oz weekly)  Grades 9-12 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (9-10 oz weekly)  Note: Quantity required SY 2013-14. Schools may substitute M/MA for grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met.
Whole Grains	Encouraged	At least half of the grains must be whole grain-rich beginning July 1, 2013. Beginning July 1, 2014, all grains must be whole grain rich.
Milk	1 cup  Variety of fat contents allowed; flavor not restricted	1 cup  Must be fat-free (unflavored/flavored) or 1% low fat (unflavored)

Comparison of Current and New Regulatory Requirements under Final Rule “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs” Jan. 2012

Nutrient Standards	New Standards K-12		
<p><b>Sodium</b> Reduce, no set targets</p>	<p><b>Target 1: SY 2014-15</b> Lunch ≤1230mg (K-5); ≤1360mg (6-8); ≤1420mg (9-12) Breakfast ≤540mg (K-5); ≤600mg (6-8); ≤640mg (9-12)</p>	<p><b>Target 2: SY 2017-18</b> Lunch ≤935mg (K-5) ≤1035mg (6-8); ≤1080mg (9-12) Breakfast ≤485mg (K-5); ≤535mg (6-8); ≤570mg (9-12)</p>	<p><b>Final target: 2022-23</b> Lunch ≤640mg (K-5); ≤710mg (6-8); ≤740mg (9-12) Breakfast ≤430mg (K-5); ≤470mg (6-8); ≤500mg (9-12)</p>
<p><b>Calories (min. only)</b> <i>Traditional Menu Planning</i> Lunch: 633 (grades K-3) 785 (grades 4-12) 825 (optional grades 7-12) Breakfast: 554 (grades K-12)</p> <p><i>Enhanced Menu Planning</i> Lunch: 664 (grades K-6) 825 (grades 7-12) 633 (optional grades K-3) Breakfast: 554 (grades K-12) 774 (optional grades 7-12)</p> <p><i>Nutrient Based Menu Planning</i> Lunch: 664 (grades K-6) 825 (grades 7-12) 633 (optional grades K-3) Breakfast: 554 (grades K-12) 618 (optional grades 7-12)</p>	<p><b>Calorie Ranges (min. &amp; max.)</b> <i>Only food-based menu planning allowed</i> Lunch: 550-650 (grades K-5) 600-700 (grades 6-8) 750-850 (grades 9-12) Breakfast: 350-500 (grades K-5) 400-550 (grades 6-8) 450-600 (grades 9-12)</p>		
<p><b>Saturated Fat</b> &lt;10% of total calories</p>	<p><b>Saturated Fat</b> &lt;10% of total calories</p>		
<p><b>Trans Fat:</b> no limit</p>	<p><b>New specification:</b> zero grams per serving (nutrition label)</p>		

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM  
PROPOSED 2012-2013 BUDGET  
with Actual 2010-2011 / Estimated 2011-2012 Comparison

	Actual 2010-2011	Estimated 2011-2012	Difference Est. 11-12 vs. Actual 10-11	Proposed 2012-2013	Difference Prop. 12-13 vs Est. 11-12
<b>BALANCE ON HAND 7/1</b>	\$802,822.00	\$771,286.00	(\$31,536.00)	\$520,430.00	(\$250,856.00)
<b>REVENUE</b>					
RECEIPTS	\$2,425,444.00	\$2,489,714.00	\$64,270.00	\$2,803,053.00	\$313,339.00
FEDERAL AID (Free & Reduced)	\$442,865.00	\$463,191.00	\$20,326.00	\$471,516.00	\$8,325.00
MEAL PATTERN SUBSIDY				\$37,099.00	\$37,099.00
STATE REIMBURSEMENT	\$30,613.00	\$35,049.00	\$4,436.00	\$31,592.00	(\$3,457.00)
STATE REIMBURSEMENT - PUBLIC ACT 06-63	\$60,081.00	\$69,533.00	\$9,452.00	\$67,081.00	(\$2,452.00)
SPECIAL REVENUE (Catering)	\$15,770.00	\$14,032.00	(\$1,738.00)	\$12,000.00	(\$2,032.00)
REBATES	\$15,674.00	\$13,528.00	(\$2,146.00)	\$12,000.00	(\$1,528.00)
INTEREST (POS Balance & Interest Rate)	\$707.00	\$511.00	(\$196.00)	\$500.00	(\$11.00)
<b>TOTAL CURRENT REVENUE</b>	<b>\$2,991,154.00</b>	<b>\$3,085,558.00</b>	<b>\$94,404.00</b>	<b>\$3,434,841.00</b>	<b>\$349,283.00</b>
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>					
FOOD	\$1,225,918.00	\$1,274,466.00	\$48,548.00	\$1,310,889.00	\$36,423.00
SUPPLIES	\$106,145.00	\$157,682.00	\$51,537.00	\$160,598.00	\$2,916.00
DELIVERY & STORAGE	\$5,083.00	\$3,514.00	(\$1,569.00)	\$4,000.00	\$486.00
SALARIES	\$1,223,169.00	\$1,236,328.00	\$13,159.00	\$1,256,684.00	\$20,356.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	\$396,000.00	\$380,126.00	(\$15,874.00)	\$395,963.00	\$15,837.00
TRAINING/TRAVEL/CONFERENCES/DUES	\$38,715.00	\$19,950.00	(\$18,765.00)	\$14,200.00	(\$5,750.00)
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE (Incl. Signage)	\$52,698.00	\$48,037.00	(\$4,661.00)	\$44,475.00	(\$3,562.00)
EQUIPMENT	\$1,618.00	\$25,136.00	\$23,518.00	\$12,000.00	(\$13,136.00)
SOFTWARE MAINT/LICENSE FEE	\$11,453.00	\$9,658.00	(\$1,795.00)	\$9,658.00	\$0.00
CUSTODIAL FEES / UTILITY FEES (sq ft)	\$0.00	\$167,454.00	\$167,454.00	\$162,751.00	(\$4,703.00)
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$3,060,799.00</b>	<b>\$3,322,351.00</b>	<b>\$261,552.00</b>	<b>\$3,371,218.00</b>	<b>\$48,867.00</b>
<b>CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE 6/30</b>	<b>(\$69,645.00)</b>	<b>(\$236,793.00)</b>	<b>(\$167,148.00)</b>	<b>\$63,623.00</b>	<b>\$300,416.00</b>
<b>ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE/PAYABLE ADJUSTMENT TO CONVERT TO CASH *</b>	<b>\$38,109.00</b>	<b>(\$14,063.00)</b>	<b>(\$52,172.00)</b>	<b>\$12,023.00</b>	<b>\$26,086.00</b>
<b>CASH BALANCE ON HAND 6/30</b>	<b>\$771,286.00</b>	<b>\$520,430.00</b>	<b>(\$250,856.00)</b>	<b>\$596,076.00</b>	<b>\$75,646.00</b>
Accounts Receivable @6/30 (Est FY11 & FY12)	\$93,784.00	\$96,253.00	\$2,469.00	\$95,018.50	(\$1,234.50)
Value of Inventory on Hand @ 6/30 (Est FY11 & FY12)	\$32,230.00	\$27,000.00	(\$5,230.00)	\$29,615.00	\$2,615.00
Accounts Payable @ 6/30 (Est FY11 & FY12)	(\$159,954.00)	(\$143,931.00)	\$16,023.00	(\$151,942.50)	(\$8,011.50)
<b>Computed Operating Position @ 6/30 Using State Calc (Est FY11 &amp; FY12)</b>	<b>\$737,346.00</b>	<b>\$499,752.00</b>	<b>(\$237,594.00)</b>	<b>\$568,767.00</b>	<b>\$69,015.00</b>
<b>NUMBER OF MONTHS' EXPENSE ON HAND AT 6/30 (Est FY12 &amp; FY13)</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>1.50</b>		<b>1.69</b>	

\* This represents the net change from July 1 to June 30 in the Accounts Receivable (Federal Reimbursement, Credit Card Receivables, Bad Checks), Accounts Payable (Student P.O.S. System, Payroll Withholdings, Commodity Fees...) and Inventory (Supplies, Food).

JUN 12 2012

*Fairfield Public Schools  
Fairfield, Connecticut  
Food and Nutrition Services*

**To:** Dr. David Title and Board of Education Members  
**From:** Joann D. Fitzpatrick, Manager of Food and Nutrition Services  
**Date:** **June 7, 2012**  
**Re:** Healthy Food Certification for School Year 2012 - 2013

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The Connecticut State Healthy Food Certification provides an additional \$.10 per reimbursable school lunch meal. Each year the Board of Education is required to vote on the school district's commitment to the requirements of Healthy Food Certification. School districts have the choice to exclude foods at events after the regular school day as long as the food served on location is not from vending machines and school stores. Two separate board motions are recommended as food and beverages are under different regulations.

The first recommended motion presented to the Board is "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."

The second recommended motion presented to the Board is "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."

Connecticut State Department of Education  
Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)  
**Healthy Food Certification Statement**

**Section 1 – Background**

Section 10-215e of the Connecticut General Statutes directs the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to develop and publish nutrition standards for food items offered for sale to students at school separately from reimbursable meals sold as part of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Section 10-215f requires that participants in the National School Lunch Program, including each local and regional board of education, regional educational service center, the Connecticut Technical High School System and the governing authority for each state charter school, interdistrict magnet school and endowed academy, must certify each year in its annual application to the CSDE whether all food items made available for sale to students will meet the nutrition standards. Section 10-215b further provides additional funding to National School Lunch Program participants who annually certify compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards.

**Section 2 – Certification Statement**

► ***Must be completed by all Connecticut public school districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program.***

On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ and  
*(Name of the Board of Education or Governing Authority)*

pursuant to section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes, I hereby certify that all food items offered for sale to students in the school(s) under our jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, *(select appropriate box)*

**will** *(must complete Sections 3 and 4 on page 2)*

**will not** *(sign below and return form)*

meet said standards during the period of **July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013**. Such certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises, whether or not school sponsored.

**Local or Regional Board of Education or  
Governing Authority**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signature of the Authorized Representative)*                      *(Printed Name of the Authorized Representative)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Title (Superintendent of Schools, President or Chairperson of the Board)*                      *Date of Authorization*

**Section 3 – Exemption Statement**

▶ *To be completed only by districts opting for the healthy food certification, i.e., those districts that checked “will” in Section 2.*

Pursuant to section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes, I hereby acknowledge that the board of education or governing authority, *(select appropriate box)*

- will
- will not

exclude from certification food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, provided that (1) such food is 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.

**Section 4 – Amendment to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)**

▶ *To be completed only by districts opting for the healthy food certification, i.e., those districts that checked “will” in Section 2.*

Pursuant to section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099) with

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*(Name of the Board of Education or Governing Authority)*

is hereby amended to include the above certification statement of compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and application for funding related to those standards. This addendum covers the period from **July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.**

**Local or Regional Board of Education or  
Governing Authority**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signature of the Authorized Representative)*      *(Printed Name of the Authorized Representative)*

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
*Title (Superintendent of Schools, President or Chairperson of the Board)*      *Date of Authorization*

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**FOR STATE USE ONLY • DO NOT SIGN BELOW THIS LINE**

Connecticut State Department of Education

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ **Brian Mahoney** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signature of State Agency Representative)*      *(Printed Name of State Agency Representative)*

**Chief Financial Officer** \_\_\_\_\_  
Title      Date

*The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The Department of Education does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding the Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Levy Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director/American with Disabilities Act Coordinator, State of Connecticut Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457, 860-807-2101, Levy.Gillespie@ct.gov.*

JUN 12 2012

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM  
 Price History  
 Lunch and Breakfast

	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	Proposed 12-13
Full Price Lunches:												
Elementary Schools	\$1.60	\$1.60	\$1.70	\$1.80	\$1.90	\$2.10	\$ 2.10	\$ 2.20	\$ 2.10	\$ 2.10	\$ 2.20	\$ 2.45
Middle Schools	1.65	1.65	1.75	1.85	1.95	2.15	2.15	2.25	2.15	2.15	2.25	2.50
High Schools	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.90	2.00	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.55
Deluxe Meals (Middle School/High School)						3.50	3.50	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.60	3.85
Breakfast (McKinley only)					1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.35	1.50
Reduced Price Lunches	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40
Reduced Price Breakfast					0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
Adult Lunches	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.75	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	5.00
Milk	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50



JUN 12 2012

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM  
Cook Managers and General Workers  
2012-2013  
Proposed 2% Increase Hourly Rates

**Proposed  
Increase:  
2.00%**

POSITION	# of Emp	GRADE & STEP	Hours	2011-2012 HOURLY RATE	2012-2013 HOURLY RATE
<b>Managers</b>					
Elementary	11	E1	6	18.89	19.27
Middle School	3	M1	6.5	21.10	21.53
High School	2	H1	7	23.05	23.52
<b>Workers</b>					
	57		Varies	12.48	12.73
	5		Varies	13.69	13.96
Current # of Employees	78				

Proposed 0% Increase Employee Contribution

Insurance	Coverage Type	# of Contracts	11-12 Current Empl % Contribution	12-13 Proposed Empl % Contribution
Anthem PPO	Individual	12	6%	7%
	Family	1	*	*
Anthem HMO	Individual	1	4%	5%
	Family	0	*	*
Prescription	Individual	13	6%	7%
	Family	1	*	*
Dental	None			

\* Employee pays the difference between BOE Contribution for Individual coverage and full premium cost for 2 Person or Family coverage

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS JUN 12 2012

# Board of Education

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# Handbook

**DRAFT**  
**6/4/2012**

This handbook summarizes various policies, protocols and practices of the Board of Education to aid its members and the general public in understanding the operating principles of the Board.

# **Board of Education Member Handbook - Fairfield, Connecticut**

**June 4, 2012 - Sixth Draft**

## **I. Introductory Letter from Board Chair and Superintendent**

## **II. Fairfield Public Schools Mission, Beliefs and Goals**

## **III. Board of Education Meetings**

- A. Master Calendar
- B. Meetings
- C. Agenda
- D. Minutes
- E. Decision making process
- F. Public Comment on agenda items
- G. Public Comment on non-agenda items
- H. Superintendent's Report
- I. Robert's Rules of Order
- J. Open Board Comment during meetings
- K. Executive Session

## **IV. Board of Education committee and liaison responsibilities**

- A. Board Authority and Responsibility
- B. Election of Board of Education Members
- C. Committee of the Whole
- D. Appointments
- E. Reports
- F. Policy Standing Committee
- G. Transportation Safety Advisors
- H. Liaison Responsibilities
  - 1. Town Charter Positions
    - a. Fairfield Board of Health
    - b. Fairfield Parks and Recreation Commission
  - 2. BoE By-laws
    - a. Cooperative Education Services
    - b. Building Committees
    - c. Representative Town Meeting
    - d. Board of Finance
    - e. PTA Council
  - 3. Ad Hoc and Standing Building Committees
    - a. Special Projects Standing Building Committee
    - b. Building Projects Review Committee
    - c. SEPTA
- I. Meeting Schedule of other Town Bodies

## **V. Standards of Conduct**

- A. Discussion among members outside of meetings
- B. Public Comment by BoE members
- C. Charter of the Town of Fairfield – Standards of Conduct
- D. Fairfield Board of Education – Standards of Conduct

## **VI. Annual Budget Process**

- A. BoE staff and Board Roles and Responsibilities
- B. Timetable
- C. Advocacy of and Support for BoE Initiatives
- D. Attendance and support at BoS, BoF, RTM town meetings

## **VII. Evaluation, public complaints, staff grievances and discipline responsibilities**

- A. Procedures for Public suggestions and complaints
- B. Group BoE email address
- C. Employee grievance and discipline hearings
- D. Employee contract negotiations
- E. Student expulsion hearings
- F. Student residency hearings
- G. Superintendent's annual evaluation/contract

## **VIII. Administrative Matters**

- A. By-laws
- B. Board of Education annual self-evaluation
- C. Attendance at school events
- D. Conference attendance
- E. Information requests from BoE members
- F. Fairfield Public Schools WEB site
- G. Friday packets
- H. Board of Education packets
- I. Recycling of BoE materials
- J. Use of ID badge while visiting school facilities
- K. Individual BoE email addresses
- L. Parking and other services at BoE headquarters

## **IX. Definitions and Acronyms**

### **Disclaimer Statement**

This Board of Education Handbook contains general information drawn from the following source documents: the Town of Fairfield's Charter, BoE By-laws, BoE Policies, Administrative Regulations, and Fairfield Public School's business practices. It also contains information from *Twenty Guidelines for Board Members* written by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) and *A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law* by Thomas Mooney, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

This Handbook is only intended to summarize, and bring together in a single location, certain information, policies and practices helpful to members of the Board of Education and the general public in understanding the organizing principles, authority and operation of the Board of Education and Fairfield Public Schools.

The information in this Handbook should not be relied upon as an alternative to reviewing the full and complete source documents on the topic.

This Handbook is not intended to, and does not change, modify, or supersede any existing BoE Policy, Administrative Regulation, or practice. This Handbook does not create any new or additional obligation or requirement on the BoE, administration, or Fairfield Public School district, and is to be used solely for information purposes.

I. **Introductory Letter**

II. **Fairfield Public Schools Mission, Beliefs and Goals** The Board of Education has adopted a series of policies outlining the mission, beliefs and goals of the Fairfield Public Schools. The long term goal is to sustain the continuing improvement of the Fairfield Public Schools so that they will continue to rank with the best in the nation. (Policy 0110, Approved 8/27/04)

A. **Mission** The mission of the Fairfield Public Schools is to inspire students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be life-long learners, responsible citizens, and successful participants in an ever-changing global society by providing, in partnership with families and community, a comprehensive, rigorous educational program. (Policy 0100, Revised and Approved 9/23/08)

B. **Beliefs** (Policy 0100, Revised and Approved 9/23/08)

1. We believe all individuals can learn.
2. We believe high expectations drive high achievement.
3. We believe family and community, in partnership, play an essential role in the development and education of a child.
4. We believe kindness, respect and compassion enhance life and improve performance.
5. We believe that growth occurs when independent thinking, creativity and appropriate risk taking are encouraged.
6. We believe valuing and nurturing diversity promotes learning.
7. We believe everyone has the ability and responsibility to make a positive difference.
8. We believe that positive self image is built through high expectations, honesty and accomplishments.
9. We believe that knowledge and skills acquired should be relevant and adaptable for life-long learning.
10. We believe that all students should have equitable access to educational opportunities.
11. We believe in promoting a healthy life.
12. We believe that collaboration and commitment promote the common good.

C. **Student Goals** The ultimate goal of a school system is to promote the positive development of students. The Fairfield Public Schools has adopted five student-focused goals including: 1. Motivation to learn, 2. Mastery of the basic skills, 3. Acquisition of knowledge, 4. Competence in life skills, and 5. Understanding society's values. (Policy 0200, Approved 8/27/04)

### **III. Board of Education Meetings**

A. **Master Calendar** The Board of Education shall hold at least ten (10) regular scheduled meetings a year and shall give annual notice of such meetings. (Town Charter, Article VIII, Section 8.1.B.1) Currently the BoE holds fourteen regular meetings a year and the agenda for each meeting, as described in Section III-C, is established between the Superintendent and the Board Chair. While individual action items on a variety of topics can be scheduled for any meeting, currently the work of the BoE follows a familiar pattern, (subject to change) as described below.

1. January – two regular meetings and two budget review meetings are held, and a proposed budget is adopted at the last regular meeting in January to meet the Town Charter requirement of submitting a budget request by January 31st.
2. February – one regular meeting, which allows for attendance by BoE members at various budget review sessions conducted by the BoS, BoF and RTM.
3. March – one regular meeting, which allows for attendance by BoE members at various budget review sessions by the BoS, BoF and RTM.
4. April – one regular meeting. The Board sets the graduation dates for both high schools in April. In addition, the Board meets to conduct its annual self-evaluation in this month at a special meeting.
5. May – two regular meetings, including one at which budget adjustments are reviewed and approved, if required, based on changes in total funding granted and approved by the RTM. In addition, student awards are presented in May.
6. June – two regular meetings. Budget transfers, if necessary for the current fiscal year, are done. The school lunch program, lunch prices, lunch program employee wage increases, as well as participation in Healthy Foods Certification program are reviewed and approved. The BoE reflects on improvements to the budget presentation documents. Evaluation of the Superintendent of schools and extension of contract is acted upon.
7. July – no regular meetings are scheduled.
8. August – one regular meeting is scheduled the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. The Board holds a discussion on the initiatives of the Fairfield Public Schools for the next year. It also holds a general discussion regarding next year's capital and operating budgets. The BoE discusses its own goals, including how best to present the needs of students to insure the proposed BoE budget is approved by other town bodies.
9. September – two regular meetings are scheduled. Board gets presentation on Capital Improvements Budget. BoE approves its own goals.
10. October – one regular meeting is held. The Board approves the proposed Capital Improvements budget. The school calendar for the following year is adopted.

11. November – one regular meeting is held with the primary purpose to hold the annual organization meeting at which officers are elected and by-laws are reviewed and other organizational matters which may come before the BoE.

12. December – one regular scheduled meeting is held. The BoE meeting calendar for the following year is issued at this meeting. By-law changes proposed in November, are adopted. The proposed budget calendar for BoE, BoS, BoF and the RTM is reviewed.

B. **Meetings** The Board of Education conducts its meetings under the laws and provisions of the Freedom of Information Act ("FoIA") based on a schedule published in December for the following year. The BoE can cancel regular meetings when there is no business that cannot wait until the next regular meeting. The BoE can also schedule Special Meetings if matters arise requiring action that cannot wait until the next regular meeting. There are three types of meetings under FoIA as follows: (As outlined in *A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law*, by Thomas B. Mooney, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, pages 44 – 64)

1. Regular Meeting – which has been included in the listing of regular meetings which has been filed by January 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. By Fairfield BoE practice the list of scheduled, regular meetings is published at the December regular meeting and submitted to the Town Clerk.

2. Special Meeting – which must be noticed twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting including the time, place and business to be transacted. The most significant difference from a regular meeting is that items cannot be added to the agenda and only such business as is included on the notice of the meeting can be addressed.

3. Emergency Meeting – which is similar to a special meeting but is exempt from the twenty-four hour notice provisions. The minutes shall include a statement of the nature of the emergency and any decisions made, and those minutes must be filed with the town clerk within seventy-two hours.

4. Non-Meeting – Certain meetings are excluded from the definition of "meeting" under the FoIA. Any meetings of a personnel search committee; a chance meeting or social gathering, even if a quorum of the board shows up at the event, provided the board does not discuss business; a caucus of members of a single political party; and strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining are among those topics that can be discussed in a non-meeting.

C. **Agenda** The agenda is established in discussions between the Superintendent of Schools and the Chairperson of the Board of Education. Individual BoE members may ask for items to be placed on the agenda. Requests will be reasonably accepted and placed on the agenda as time allows. (Board practice) The Board shall have the agenda with its materials and enclosures, at least five days prior to the meeting. (By-laws Article V, Section 3, paragraph A). The agenda is designed for the guidance and information of the Board and to inform the public of items of business to come before the board. Additional items, not included in the filed agenda, may be considered and acted upon at regular meetings upon the affirmative vote of two third (2/3) of the members of the Board present and voting. (By-laws, Article V, Section 3, paragraph C).

D. **Minutes** Minutes are maintained in accordance with state law and the Fairfield Town Charter. All meetings are recorded, and the audio-video tape and all records are retained in accordance with the state statutes on records retention. The Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent reviews his/her notes from the meeting and listens to the audio/videotape of the meeting and constructs a draft set of minutes. The draft minutes are reviewed by the elected Secretary of the BoE, and after a draft set of minutes is finalized, they are included in the Board agenda for review and approval by the full Board. (Board practice)

E. **Decision Making Process** Except in emergencies, the Board shall not attempt to decide upon any question submitted for consideration by any person or persons until the Board has examined and evaluated all information. (By-laws – Article 5, Section 7) BoE members will do their homework by reading and studying the agenda and all backup information in advance. (CABE Boardsmanship – *Twenty Guidelines for Board Members # 16*)

F. **Public Comment on agenda items** The BoE will accept public comment on all items placed on the agenda for discussion and action, at the time the item appears on the agenda. Public comment is not generally taken on the minutes, election of officers, BoE By-laws, presentations and personnel matters. Public comment will follow discussion of the item by the BoE and prior to any vote. The standard practice has been to allow each speaker two minutes on a specific business item. Where a number of speakers wish to present on a single topic, the Chair may allow one person to represent the group, in which case additional time, at the discretion of the Chair, can be allowed. The Chair may limit public comment in any manner appropriate to the orderly and efficient conduct of Board meetings. (Board practice per By-laws – Article 5, Section 6, Paragraph A)

G. **Public Comment on non-agenda items** The BoE will hear comments and receive petitions from any citizen present at a regular meeting. Any single presentation must be limited to two minutes, and audio-visual equipment cannot be used without advance authorization of the Chairperson. The Board will not hear comment on individual personnel matters or comments addressed to specific member(s) of the Board. Decorum will be maintained. (Board practice per By-laws – Article 5, Section 6, Paragraph B)

H. **Superintendent's Report** At the conclusion of the Superintendent's Report, questions from Board members shall be related only to the topics addressed by the Superintendent. (Board Practice)

I. **Robert's Rules of Order** The Board of Education has adopted Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, Perseus Publishing to encourage full, fair and orderly discussion; to maintain order; to respect each member's right to speak; and to allow for action by the majority within a practical period of time while protecting the rights of the minority to express their viewpoints. (By-laws – Article 5, Section 9 and Robert's Rules of Order defined)

J. **Open Board Comment during meetings** The Open Board comment period should not be used to surprise the Board or the Superintendent. BoE members will make every effort to first talk with the Board Chair or the Superintendent or ask for an item to be placed on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at a meeting. (CABE Boardsmanship – *Twenty Guidelines for Board Members # 1* and Chairman's email, Fall, 2011)



K. **Executive Session** The public has a right to be at BoE meetings and to know when, where, and why we are meeting. Thus, all BoE meetings will begin in public, and the reason for a proposed Executive Session, in as much detail as possible, shall be included on the agenda. A 2/3 vote is required to go into Executive Session. The BoE shall state, on the record, for which of the approved reasons it is going into Executive Session:

1. Discussions of personnel appointments, evaluation and dismissals (employee must be notified, and can be present and/or can require meeting to be public).
2. To discuss strategy and/or negotiations on pending claims and litigation.
3. Security matters.
4. Real estate acquisitions, if openness might affect price.
5. Discussions which might disclose records which are exempt from disclosure under state law.

No votes shall be taken in Executive Session.

(The above statements are summarized from Town Clerk, Betsy Browne's, memo of November 18, 2011) A more complete discussion of FoIA can be found in *A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law* by Thomas Mooney, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, Pages 55 to 64.)

#### **IV. Board of Education committee and liaison responsibilities**

- A. **Board Authority and Responsibility** The Fairfield Board of Education is the governing body of the Fairfield Public Schools and derives its power from, and exists under, the Constitution and General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. (By-laws Article I) Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a Board of Education. The BoE is a collective body and, by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted meeting. The statements and actions of individual Board members do not bind the Board of Education or the Superintendent, except when that statement or action has been authorized by an official act of the Board.
- B. **Election of Board of Education Members** The Fairfield Board of Education is a nine member, bi-partisan Board. Board members serve four year terms, with four members up for election in one election cycle and five members up for election two years later. By example in 2011 five members were up for election, and in 2013 four members are up for election.
- C. **Committee of the Whole** The BoE, at its November, 2011 Organization meeting, decided to maintain a single standing committee to review policy matters. All other business items including, but not limited to, curriculum, special programs, facilities, information technology, long range planning, finance, budget and community relations shall be reviewed by the Board acting as a committee of the whole at regular and special meetings.
- D. **Appointments** The Chairperson shall appoint, or re-appoint, BoE members to the various standing, advisory and ad hoc committees, as well as maintain liaison responsibilities to other town boards and commissions, following the annual organization meeting each November. (By-laws, Article II, Section 3, Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5)
- E. **Reports** Liaison and committee reports should be sent in advance for distribution in the Friday packet. Where additional oral reports are needed, please make your point in as few words as possible. Meeting Reports, if required, should be no longer than two minutes. (CABE Boardmanship – *Twenty Guidelines for Board Members # 1* and Chairman’s email, Fall, 2011)
- F. **Policy Standing Committee** **The purpose of this committee is** to formulate and recommend written policies by which the Board shall exercise its leadership in the operation of the School District and to study and evaluate administrative regulations and reports concerning the execution of the Board’s written policies in accordance with Article IV, Section 2. (By-laws, Article II, Section 4 Paragraph A, sub section 1 & 2)
- G. **Transportation Safety Advisors** The Transportation Safety Advisors are a working group that makes recommendations relative to school transportation safety. The Transportation Safety Advisors are generally comprised of the Transportation Supervisor, a Board of Education member, and a representative from the police department and the bus contractor. The primary function of this Transportation Safety Advisors is to review, upon written referral, a transportation decision made by the Transportation Supervisor on a request for a bus route or stop change made by a parent or citizen. The decision is reviewed for compliance with Board of Education transportation policy and related administrative regulations. (Policies 3600 et seq.)

## H. **Liaison Responsibilities**

1. Town Charter Positions
  - a. Fairfield Board of Health – In accordance with section 10.9 of the Town Charter, a BoE member is designated annually and serves as a voting member of the Board of Health.
  - b. Fairfield Parks and Recreation Commission – In accordance with section 10.10 of the Town Charter, a BoE member is designated annually and serves as a voting member of the Parks and Recreation Commission.
2. BoE By-laws
  - a. Cooperative Education Services – In accordance with the charter and by-laws of CES, Fairfield has two seats on the CES Board as voting members of this not-for-profit fiduciary board.
  - b. Building Committees – State law requires the establishment of Building Committees to oversee the development of major school construction projects if a district wishes to apply for, and receive, reimbursement of a portion of the costs of such construction. In accordance with BoE By-laws, and subject to any approvals required by the Town, the BoE Chair appoints a member of the board to act as a voting member of any school building committee. (By-law Section A.3.d) The BoE creates Educational Specifications for individual projects and requests the First Selectman to appoint such a committee, subject to the approval of the Representative Town Meeting.
  - c. Representative Town Meeting – In accordance with BoE By-laws, the BoE has maintained a liaison relationship with the RTM and annually appoints a member to attend meetings for the purpose of developing a closer working relationship and to enhance communications.
  - d. Board of Finance – In accordance with BoE By-laws, the BoE has maintained a liaison relationship with the BoF and annually appoints a member to attend meetings for the purpose of developing a closer working relationship and to enhance communications.
  - e. PTA Council – In accordance with BoE By-laws, the BoE has maintained a liaison relationship with the PTA Council and annually appoints a member to attend meetings for the purpose of developing a closer working relationship and to enhance communications.
3. Ad Hoc and Standing Building Committees
  - a. Special Projects Standing Building Committee – This committee was established to oversee selected projects, as may be assigned to them by the First Selectman. A BoE member is appointed as a voting member.

- b. **Building Projects Review Committee** – This temporary committee has been established by the First Selectman to review the process under which building projects are reviewed, approved and managed. A member of the BoE is appointed and serves on this committee, in addition to the Superintendent, or designee.
- c. **SEPTA** – By past practice the BoE has maintained a liaison relationship with the Special Education Parent Teacher Association and annually appoints a member to attend meetings for the purpose of developing a closer working relationship and to enhance communications.

I. **Meeting Schedule of other Town bodies**

- 1. **The Board of Selectmen** The first and third Wednesday of every month in the 1st floor conference room of Sullivan Independence Hall at 4:30pm
- 2. **The Board of Finance** The first Tuesday of every month in the BoE conference room at 7:30pm
- 3. **The Representative Town Meeting (“RTM”)** The 4th Monday of the month at Board of Education headquarters at 8:00pm. RTM subcommittees meet as follows (subject to change by the RTM):
  - a. **Legislation and Administration**, 3rd Monday of the month in Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:00pm
  - b. **Finance**, 3rd Monday of the month in Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:30pm
  - c. **Public Works and Planning**, 3rd Monday of the month in Sullivan Independence Hall at 8:00pm
  - d. **Education and Recreation**, 3rd Wednesday of the month in Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:00pm
  - e. **Public Health and Safety**, 3rd Wednesday of the month in Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:30pm
- 4. Citizens interested in attending meetings of any town body should check the town WEB site at [www.fairfieldct.org](http://www.fairfieldct.org) to confirm the meeting schedule and location and to find agendas, minutes and other related documents.
- 5. All Regular meetings, and some Special Meetings, of the Board of Education are videotaped and broadcast by FairTV, generally on Channel 78, on a real time basis. They can also be viewed on line, on demand and are broadcast at other times. Contact FairTV at [www.fairtveducation@gmail.com](mailto:www.fairtveducation@gmail.com) to determine how to watch archived BoE meetings.

## V Standards of Conduct

- A. **Discussion among members outside of meetings** BoE members must debate the business and policy of the school district within public view. Thus, group emails, regarding issues before the BoE, or which may reasonably be considered to come before the BoE, may not be discussed via email. Individual members of the BoE may consult with one another on issues, but group emails on such issues are not permitted. (By-laws – Article V, Section 10)
- B. **Public Comment by BoE members** BoE members can speak to the media, but only the Chairman can speak on behalf of the Board. BoE members should feel comfortable deferring comment to the Chairman or to the Superintendent. (By-laws, Article II, Section 3, paragraph A.2 and Policy 1100)
- C. **Charter of the Town of Fairfield – Standards of Conduct** Elected and appointed Town officers, RTM members, members of boards, commissions, authorities, and committees, and all employees of the Town shall demonstrate by their example the highest standards of ethical conduct, to the end that the public may justifiably have trust and confidence in the integrity of government. As agents of public purpose, they shall hold their offices or positions for the benefit of the public, shall recognize that the public interest is their primary concern, and shall faithfully discharge the duties of their office regardless of personal considerations. (Section 11.1 of Town Charter)

The above statement of policy is further defined in the Town Charter through:

1. Conflicts of interest – Section 11.2
2. Disclosure of self-interest – Section 11.3
3. Fair and equal treatment – Section 11.4
4. Penalties and disciplinary action for violations – Section 11.5

D. **Fairfield Board of Education – Standards of Conduct** Members of the BoE have adopted additional standards of conduct through their by-laws. BoE members must:

1. Adhere to the most recent edition of CABA's Code of Ethics (Art. II, Sec. 2)
2. Comply with the conflicts of interest statements (Art. III, Sec 6)
3. Follow a code of ethics (Art VII, as further defined in Policy 0050, Approved 8/27/04).

## **VI. Annual Budget Process**

A. **BoE staff and Board Roles and Responsibilities** The annual budget preparation process shall include broad-based participation and careful scrutiny of programs and expenditures to help the Board fulfill its responsibilities to the students, staff, and town. The Board shall review projected costs, finalize requirements, establish a desirable budget amount, and specify parameters for the Superintendent to use in the development of a proposed budget. (Board Policy 3100 Approved 8/27/04)

B. **Timetable** To facilitate accomplishing this role, an annual operating and capital budget calendar is established to insure the BoE can discuss Fairfield Public School initiatives, reflect on the budget presentation process and have adequate time to review and approve the budget.

C. **Advocacy of and Support for BoE Initiatives** Board members and Superintendents are staunch advocates of high quality, free education for all Connecticut children. (Policy 0050, Approved 8/27/04)

D. **Attendance and support at BoS, BoF, RTM town meetings** BoE members will make every effort to attend the BoS, BoF, RTM subcommittee meetings, and RTM meetings pertaining to our education budget request and at other times throughout the year as initiatives are presented for town approval. (Board Practice)

## VII. **Evaluation, public complaints, staff grievances and discipline responsibilities**

- A. **Procedures for Public suggestions and complaints** Board members will refer all complaints through the proper "chain of command" within the system and will act on such complaints at public meetings only when administrative solutions fail. (By-laws, Article VII, Paragraph 17, Amended and Approved November, 2011) This by-law is further defined by BoE policy: "...If a complaint is made to individual Board members, the person making the complaint shall be referred to the proper administrator and informed that the matter may be referred to the Superintendent if the complainant does not agree with the initial decision. (Policy 1300, approved 8/27/04) The essence of these by-laws and policies is to not be a "ball carrier" for others. Parents and other citizens should present their own issues, problems, or proposals through the chain of command. (CABE Boardmanship – Twenty Guidelines for Board members # 6)
- B. **Group BoE email address** [boemembers@fairfieldschools.org](mailto:boemembers@fairfieldschools.org). This is the group email distribution for all board members as well as a member of the administrative staff. If you would like to email the group as a whole rather than typing individual email addresses, you may accomplish this by using the "boemembers" address shown above. Please note that a member of the administrative staff reviews all of the emails that come into this address and will respond accordingly when district requests are made e.g., someone from the public inquiring about a job position. BoE members will use their best judgment on whether they respond as an individual member to such emails or allow the central office staff to address the issue that was raised. (Board Practice based on Policy 1300, Approved 8/27/04)
- C. **Employee grievance and discipline hearings** The Board will act in accordance with the grievance procedures outlined in the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement. (Policy 4260, approved 8/27/04)
- D. **Employee contract negotiations** By past practice, a Negotiating Committee is appointed, comprised of a member from the Board of Education, the BoE Director of Human Resources, and the BoE Attorney. The Negotiating Committees for the Teachers and Administrators contracts also include a member of the Board of Finance. Negotiations are conducted in accordance with state law governing school district negotiations.
- E. **Student expulsion hearings** Except in an emergency situation, the Board of Education shall, prior to expelling any student, conduct a hearing to be governed by the procedures outlined in the BoE Policy Manual. The Superintendent is hereby authorized to retain a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. (Policy 5119, revised and adopted May 15, 2012)
- F. **Student residency hearings** Any child, parent or guardian may request a hearing before a hearing officer, as appointed by the Board of Education, if they believe they have been denied accommodations by the Fairfield Pubic Schools. ( Policy 5125)
- G. **Superintendent's evaluation/contract** The Board of Education conducts an annual evaluation in June for the purpose of accountability and for the mutual benefit of the Fairfield Public Schools and the Superintendent. The evaluation is based on performance against job description responsibilities and a review and analysis of approved goals and objectives. Objectives and goals are generally established in September. The BoE reviews the Superintendent's three-year contract and may offer a new three year contract.

## VIII. Administrative Matters

- A. **By-laws** The Board of Education has adopted by-laws, last revised on November 22, 2011. At its annual organizational meeting in November of each year, it shall review and revise these by-laws as the BoE deems appropriate and approve changes in December. The by-laws may also be revised at any regular meeting of the BoE, as may be properly noticed. (By-laws, Article VI)
- B. **Board of Education Annual Self-Evaluation** The BoE shall conduct an annual self-evaluation of its policies, practices and internal operating procedures in a special meeting prior to May of each year. By practice this is generally done each April. (By-laws, Article IV, Section 4)
- C. **Attendance at school events** Board of Education members are encouraged to attend school events as their schedule permits. Every effort should be made to notify central office staff or a building principal in advance of a visit, and Board members should wear their official ID.
- D. **Conference attendance** There are limited funds available for attending CABE sponsored conferences. BoE members interested in attending a conference or class should make that interest known through the Chairman to the Superintendent's office. (Board Practice)
- E. **Information Requests from BoE Members** The Superintendent provides study materials and information required to assist the Board of Education in researching and evaluating proposals before the BoE. Members are welcome to seek additional information to aid in their discussion and final action. The BoE by collective action, or the Chair, may request additional information from the Superintendent as may be required. Committee chairs can request information from the Superintendent, or Central Office staff with a copy to the Superintendent, for committee business only. Individual members may seek additional information only from the Superintendent, with a copy of all such requests given to the BoE Chair. If the information sought by either the BoE, the Chair, Committee Chairs or individual members is readily available, every effort will be made to include it in the Friday packets for BoE members, provided it is requested on a timely basis. If the information requested requires staff research time which conflicts with other priorities, the Superintendent will consult with the BoE Chair on the appropriateness and timing of the information requested. The essence of these board practices is three-fold: a. to recognize that individual board members may not give direction to the Superintendent (only the full board can), b. to insure information requested does not put an undue burden on staff and, c. to encourage BoE members to prepare their questions or requests for additional information in advance to allow adequate time for staff to gather the requested information. (Board Practice)



- F. **Fairfield Public Schools WEB site** The Fairfield Public Schools maintains a WEB site, to aid in communicating to parents and citizens, at [www.fairfieldschools.org](http://www.fairfieldschools.org). A wealth of information is available and specifically includes, within the Board of Education pages, a list of all scheduled BoE meetings, agendas and minutes; a list of members, committee work and adopted policies; a citizen's guide; the annual budget and various financial reports; the strategic plan and reports on current topics.
- G. **Friday packets** By practice "Friday packets" containing materials of interest to and for use of Board of Education members, are distributed to a variety of individuals and institutional readers as may be requested.
- H. **Board of Education packets** Board meetings are more effective when members read the materials and information within the packet prior to the meeting so it would not need to be presented orally at a BoE meeting. Board packets should be distributed five days before a meeting. (By-laws, Article V, Section 3, Paragraph A) Packets are distributed electronically on Thursday, and sent to BoE members by hard copy, on Friday prior to each board meeting.
- I. **Recycling of BoE materials** Empty Friday Folder envelopes and empty board meeting folders can be left on the back room table for recycling. (Board Practice)
- J. **Use of ID badge while visiting school facilities** During school hours and office hours, please wear your BoE badge when visiting school buildings and central office. When visiting these locations, you must also sign in at the front office of a school building or at the front desk of central office even though you have a badge. (Board practice based on Policy 3564, Approved 8/27/04)
- K. **Individual BoE email addresses** Each member of the BoE will be assigned a district email address and may make use of that, or their own personal email address. Regardless of which email address that is used, all correspondence, including via email, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. (Board Practice)
- L. **Parking and other services at BoE headquarters** There is covered parking available under the building at the BoE offices. There is a vending machine in the BoE staff break room outside the Board room. Both may be used by BoE members. (Board Practice)

**IX. Definitions and Acronyms** (Most definitions were taken from: *"Becoming a Better Board Member, A Guide to Effective School Board Service"* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by National School Boards Association or the Berlin, CT BoE Member Handbook, October, 2011)

**ADA** – Americans with Disabilities Act: A federal law that prohibits discrimination against disabled individuals in all terms and conditions of employment and requires employers to make "reasonable accommodations" for disabled applicants and employees, unless the employer can demonstrate that doing so would create "undue hardship" for the organization.

**AYP** – Adequate Yearly Progress: An individual state's measure of annual progress toward achieving state academic standards. School districts and schools are required to meet this minimum standard under the No Child Left Behind Act. According to the law, state standards will be met when all students meet the target for proficiency.

**AP** – Advanced Placement programs: A series of courses administered by the College Board that high school students can take to earn college credit. Students must master a generally high level of course work and pass an accompanying test.

**CABE** – The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education serves local and regional boards of education. It is a membership organization made up of Connecticut boards of education including 151 school districts representing 90% of the state's public school population.

**CAPSS** – The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents is a statewide, non-for-profit, educational administration organization whose membership includes Connecticut public school superintendents, assistant superintendents, central office administrative personnel, state department of education officials, and college and university professors.

**CAPT** – The Connecticut Achievement Performance Test is the standard assessment administered to students in grade 10 in March. Students are assessed in content areas of reading, mathematics, writing and science.

**CAS** – Connecticut Association of Schools. The Connecticut Association of Schools is a not-for-profit organization working to strengthen elementary and secondary education in Connecticut. Its mission is to offer exemplary programs and services that promotes excellence in education of all children.

**CEA** – Connecticut Education Association. CEA's office is headquartered in Hartford, CT with a membership of more than 41,000. CEA lobbies for pro-education legislation at the state and federal level, advances and protects the rights of teachers at the bargaining table, and works with state policymakers to continue to elevate the teaching profession and promote public education.

**CES** – Cooperative Educational Services is the local RESC serving the Fairfield Public School District. See RESC for a further definition.

**CIAC** – Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference. See CAS for definition.

**CMT** – The Connecticut Mastery Test is the standard assessment administered to students in grades 3 through 8. Students are assessed in the content areas of reading, mathematics, writing and science (grades 5 and 8).

**DRG** – District Reference Groups. To assist in reporting and analyzing school district data, the State Department of Education developed District Reference Groups, which are designed to

compare groups of districts that have similar characteristics. The state's 166 school districts and three academies have been divided into nine groups, based on socioeconomic status, indicators of need and enrollment. The Fairfield School District is in DRG B.

**ECS** – Education Cost Sharing. The Educational Cost Sharing grant is the largest state funding program for K-12 in Connecticut. The ECS formula -- the tool used to allocate ESC funds across school districts -- equalizes spending by targeting more money to poorer districts and seeks to improve educational equity by adjusting for differences among school districts in terms of student need and district wealth.

**ESL** – English as a Second Language. This is also referred to as ELL – English Language Learners or ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages.

**ETS** – Educational Testing Service: Nationwide organization that administers various kinds of educational and psychological tests, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

**FERPA** – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: A federal law that gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records.

**FMLA** – Family Medical Leave Act: A federal law requiring employers covered by the act to grant eligible employees up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave a year for an employee's own serious health conditions, or following the birth or adoption of a child; employees returning from such leave are entitled to be restored to their same position or a similar one.

**FoIA** – Freedom of Information Act. The FoIA Commission publishes rules and regulations to facilitate the informed and efficient exchange of information between governmental bodies and the general public.

**HIPAA** – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act: A federal health insurance-related act that has privacy rule implications for school districts.

**IDEA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: A federal funding statute requiring schools that receive monies under this law to provide a free and appropriate public education in the least-restrictive environment to all eligible children with disabilities.

**NAEP** – National Assessment of Educational Progress: A national testing program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education that tests representative samples of fourth, eighth, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in reading, math, science, writing, and other subjects. Known as the nation's report card, NAEP provides data on achievement over time (since 1969) and allows for regional, state-by-state, and some district comparisons of student performance.

**NEASC** – New England Association of Schools and Colleges. NEASC provides accreditation services for more than 2,000 public and private institutions in the six state region – Pre K through University.

**RESC** – Regional Educational Service Center. RESCs were created more than 30 years ago by legislative action to help school districts communicate and collaborate. Their main purpose is to furnish programs and services.