

**APPROVED**

ENCLOSURE NO. 1

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ~~JUN 26 2012~~

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, May 22, 2012, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Ms. Pamela Iacono called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:30 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Sue Brand, Mr. Philip Dwyer, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Jessica Gerber, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu, Mrs. Jennifer Maxon Kennelly and Mr. John Convertito (arrived 7:32 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 75 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Ms. Iacono led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Student Recognition-  
Dr. Title presented the Superintendent's Student Recognition Award and the CAFE Student Leadership Award to those students who were unable to attend the May 8<sup>th</sup> Awards Presentation.
4. Introduction of New Elementary School Principals-  
Dr. Title stated that four elementary principals are retiring this year. A search committee was led by Margaret Mary Fitzgerald and Anna Cutaia-Leonard. Parents and teachers were on the committee and focus groups were held at each elementary school. It was a very extensive process. Dr. Title introduced the new elementary school principals: Jason Bluestein, Burr Elementary School; Scott Bannon, Dwight Elementary School; Laura Cretella, Holland Hill Elementary School and Elizabeth McGoey, Stratfield Elementary School. These four individuals will begin their new assignments on July 1.
5. BREAK – 5 Minutes
6. Presentation
  - A. Presentation of Language Arts Curriculum, Grades Preschool-5-  
Mr. Mike Rafferty, Preschool-Grade 5 Language Arts Curriculum Leader, acknowledged his fellow educators who helped develop this curriculum. The last curriculum was adopted in 1998 and was very general, merely stating an objective or a skill across an entire year. The new curriculum is more specific and built upon a continuum. By having a tighter alignment and more assurance of rigor and appearance to a continuum we will see greater results and rise above the plateau that we are in. In developing this curriculum there was a process of research and review, the creation of year-long calendars and units, teacher trials, an alignment to the Common Core State Standards, materials were posted on the website in March and there was a parent focus group in April. Also linked to the website was a survey for teachers, parents and community members to provide feedback. The new curriculum teaches handwriting, spelling, grammar, critical reading and rigorous writing. Mr. Rafferty explained how the new curriculum differs from the old.

Board questions and comments followed.

Mrs. Brand commented on differentiation in the classroom and asked how children with special needs and children who need to be challenged with more difficult pieces will be accommodated. Mr. Rafferty stated that the Standards are the expectations for all children, and our teachers will modify the teaching to allow students to reach and exceed it. Every teacher can provide differentiation.

Mrs. Brand asked how flexible grouping will be done in the classroom. Mr. Rafferty replied that students will work on reading and writing projects while the teacher is able to access small group instruction. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard stated that there has been a lot of professional development on small group instruction.

Mrs. Brand referenced the May 18<sup>th</sup> memo and expressed concern with professional development because schools don't all have the same number of Smart boards across the district and asked what is going to be done to address that in terms of professional development. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard stated that our curriculum is not solely dependent on a piece of equipment. The curriculum has been written so that it can be delivered in all of our classrooms and can be enhanced with technology. Mr. Rafferty stated that the lessons do not depend on the use of technology to teach them.

Mr. Fattibene referenced the May 18<sup>th</sup> memo that indicates this will have a multi-year budgetary impact and asked if it will be spread out evenly over multi-years or will one year have more of a cost than other years. Mr. Rafferty replied that he sees this as spread out over multi-years and not over-burdening one particular year.

Mrs. Gerber stated that she knows there is a lot of grammar, punctuation and spelling imbedded in the curriculum and asked if there are times when the older grades, 3-5, will focus on teaching the basics so it becomes second nature. Mr. Rafferty replied that there are lessons on that all the way through elementary school. One of the things we are trying to do is slow down the writing process so students can spend the amount of time it takes to revise and then edit. These are two distinct steps and sometimes students rush them into one and something gives which is usually spelling, punctuation or grammar.

Mr. Liu commented on the development of the curriculum and asked if there was a pilot program. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard replied that it was more of a cyclical process of development as opposed to a pilot. There was a process of writing and developing, testing lessons, gathering feedback from teachers and going back to the revision table.

Mr. Liu commented on re-evaluating how the Board looks at curriculum and possibly having the Board included earlier because if the Board were to postpone approval of this curriculum, we would be doing a disservice to the District. Ms. Iacono stated that there was a policy on approving curriculum and the Board voted to eliminate it. One of the solutions was that a Board member could join any of the curriculum committees at any time.

Mr. Convertito asked if the Preschool Language Arts Curriculum is made available to the preschools in Town. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard responded that this is the first time a preschool curriculum is being brought forward to the Board for approval. Upon the Board's approval, she will be happy to share it with the preschools.

Mr. Convertito referred to the last page of the May 18<sup>th</sup> memo that talks about assessments and stated that when the Board receives the CMT results he would also like to see how we measure against the rubric as far as attaining the goals that were set within the curriculum

Mrs. Kennelly stated that she does not see the expectation of mastery in this curriculum. Mr. Rafferty stated that in elementary school as students are exploring language and learning new concepts, it is one thing to demand mastery and another to expect it. We expect our students to have lots of discussion and lots of exposure to reading and writing which will develop their ability to master it. Our teachers work individually with students who aren't meeting mastery to get them to reach mastery on the skills that were taught.

Ms. Iacono stated that if the Board wants to bring back the Curriculum Sub-committee that should be brought up during Board goals.

Mrs. Brand asked what is going to happen to the middle school curriculum to accommodate the changes here. Mr. Rafferty replied that he has worked closely with his secondary counterpart in trying to keep the alignment straight through middle school.

Mrs. Kennelly asked what changed in the curriculum based on parent feedback, focus group feedback and the on-line surveys. Mr. Rafferty responded that the document did not change much because it is largely built around Standards. The parent focus group provided feedback on texts students are exposed to, common spelling lists and the continuum of grammar instruction. While the curriculum did not change significantly as a result of feedback, we anticipate the impact to be on the implementation guide.

Mrs. Kennelly asked if the elementary schools are also following the Data Teams and asked for an example of something that was tried, didn't work and was changed. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard commented that Writers Workshop had some major changes. Mr. Rafferty stated that teachers have said that certain things have worked better than others. Dr. Title stated that Data Teams are happening at all levels. A tremendous amount of time has been spent on developing School Improvement Plans. A common format for School Improvement Plans was developed that has assessments built into it. Each school then started looking at their school-wide data using school-wide data teams. He stated that the assessment data is out there. We look at how our kids did, how the district did, how we compare and what we can do where we are not as strong. The principals then go back to their School Improvement Plan and revise their strategies based on that data. This was part of the District Improvement Plan that he presented a year ago. It is ongoing work.

Mrs. Brand commented on the tight timeline for curriculum discussion and approval and suggested if the Board gets the material ahead of time, reads it and submits their comments, it would provide the opportunity to share our thoughts and then when the curriculum ultimately gets to the Board table, there would be less questions and a better appreciation of where you are going.

7. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports

- Mrs. Brand reported that on June 3<sup>rd</sup> there will be resolution as to what qualifies for curricular and extra-curricular activities and that will help clarify the medical coverage.
- Mrs. Kennelly reminded Board members that the Board Handbook will go to the Policy Committee on June 4<sup>th</sup> and after that it will be brought back to the full Board for a first read and then a vote.

8. Superintendent's Report – No report.

9. Old Business

- A. Mrs. Kennelly moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve the Technology Education Curriculum, Grades 7-12.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- B. Mrs. Gerber moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education approve naming the North Stratfield Elementary School Fifth Grade Wing in honor of Mrs. Nancy Hanlon.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- C. Mrs. Kennelly moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer that the Board of Education approve naming the Stratfield Elementary School Library Media Center in honor of Mr. Thom Pescé.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- D. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education approve Policy #3901 – Naming of Facility.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- E. Mr. Convertito moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber that the Board of Education approve the Technology Plan, July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015.

Mrs. Parks stated that Goal 3 and Goal 5 have been updated based on Board feedback from the May 8<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. She briefly described the changes that were made. Added to Goal 3 is the development and implementation of a rubric to better assess our teachers' proficiency in the use of technology and to provide feedback of where we can provide professional development to help advance their proficiency. Added to Goal 5 is research and implement distance learning to improve the efficiency of time, the use of staff and the facilitation of student learning.

Board questions followed.

Mr. Fattibene stated that he would not be in favor of the District purchasing data plans for students. Mrs. Parks responded that the intent is not to broad-scale purchase data plans for students. Two teachers and about 40 students will be involved in a pilot to determine which devices work best for teaching and learning. We have purchased data plans because the students will be taking the device home as part of a summer school program where we are piloting them in Language Arts. At the end of the pilot program, if it is determined that the device works well in that application, then students would be expected to use their own device and we would not purchase data plans for students. We are trying to pilot for Bring Your Own Device where students would own their own devices and use their own data plans. We would only support students with devices and data plans who qualify for free and reduced lunch and cannot provide their own devices and data plans.

Ms. Iacono asked if the purchase of the data plan is only for the pilot program. Mrs. Parks responded that it is only for the pilot. There is a start date and an end date for the pilot program. It was never the intent to purchase data plans for all students.

Mrs. Brand commented on distance learning and stated that she would like to see a model that has already been vetted and that we know works. She also commented on Bring Your Own Device and the need to have a policy addressing the parameters of appropriate and acceptable use.

Mr. Convertito asked if the pilot program is to make an assessment of whether a Bring Your Own Device program would be feasible. Mrs. Parks replied that we are trying to determine what devices would work best for different applications so that if at some point we ask students to bring their own device, we would be able to recommend what device would work in a particular application.

Mr. Convertito asked if we recommend students use a tablet or a wireless device and they can't afford it, are we backing ourselves into a corner where we have to supply that tablet as well as a data plan. Mrs. Parks replied that will be part of the cost benefit analysis that will be done if we move in the direction of Bring Your Own Device.

Mrs. Kennelly commented on Goal 5 and distance learning. She asked if this is something that will be used with students serving expulsion and how it will reduce the number of students failing. Mrs. Parks replied that in planning for distance learning, we may be looking at on-line courses, video streaming courses and some type of credit recovery software that is individualized learning that teachers would oversee.

Public Comment-

Ken Lee, Rhoda Avenue, commented that he thinks this is great and the idea of filtering is important. However, he cautioned that there may not be great support for this from other Town bodies. He is concerned that a child has to have an electronic device that works while he is downtown.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

10. New Business

- A. Mr. Dwyer moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber that the Board of Education approve budget adjustments for 2012-2013 as outlined in Enclosure No. 5.

Dr. Title briefly reviewed Enclosure No. 5. The original budget request was \$149,464,941 and the RTM approved budget was \$148,936,464. In addition to the \$250,000 reduction made by the RTM, the Board must also formally vote to reduce the pension line by \$278,477 as part of a cut made prior to the RTM action. The Board must reduce the budget total by \$528,477, with the understanding that \$278,477 of that amount is in the pension line. Dr. Title stated that he tried to make these adjustments as low impact as possible and feels that he will be able to move forward on all of the initiatives discussed during the budget process.

Board questions followed on the budget adjustments.

Mrs. Brand asked what impact this will have on the District. Dr. Title stated that these were considered to be low impact as opposed to no impact. Last year a very comprehensive and pricey ten year enrollment projection was done, and this year \$5,000 was budgeted to do a one year update. Next year \$15,000 was budgeted to do a comprehensive update to the ten year plan and that will now be reduced to \$5,000 and another one year update will be done.

Mr. Convertito stated that he has an issue with professional development being cut by \$24,000 and asked if there is an alternative. Dr. Rosato replied that this amount basically targets the 13 program areas and includes professional development and curriculum development. In anticipation of this reduction he met with the curriculum leaders to prioritize their needs and look at what the impact of this reduction would be. Dr. Title stated that it looks like a large number, but when it is spread out between professional development and curriculum development and divided by 13 program areas, the impact is small. Some professional development has no direct dollar cost because we have people on staff doing it and we are not paying direct dollars out. There is a lot of PD that goes on that does not show up in the PD line.

Mr. Convertito asked if we get that additional retiree, before June 30 would this be put back. Dr. Title replied that this could be recouped over the course of the year if something went better than expected.

Mrs. Brand asked Dr. Title to very briefly explain what we are giving up; she wants to demonstrate that this is still a sacrifice

Dr. Title responded that pension and enrollment projections were discussed. Technical consulting is for professional services used in advance of projects being presented to the Town bodies and there will not be as much need next year. Recycling pickup will be changed to "call as needed" during the summer and will have substantial savings. Fuel tanks do not have an impact because with the removal of underground tanks the maintenance on above ground tanks is substantially less. Student Information Software came in at \$203,000 instead of the budgeted amount of \$250,000. Other contracted services are very minimal and professional development was discussed. Working with the Town, we think we can get better pricing on direct purchase paper. Assistive technology will be purchased with grant funds. The retirements are what they. Since

there is no reserve fund, any additional retirements will help pay for unanticipated expense for staff that happens in the middle of the summer.

Ms. Iacono asked Dr. Title to keep track of where the money is put should we exceed our retirement number.

Mrs. Kennelly commented on teacher retirements and asked if there is a policy or central office directive that teachers and administrators can only be hired if they are at a certain step. Dr. Title replied that there is a guideline, but if there is no qualified individual at the lower end of the pay scale, we have hired people at the top of the pay scale. This represents an average of the savings from multiple retirements.

Mr. Convertito moved, seconded by Mr. Kery to Call the Question.

Motion to Call the Question carried: 9:0:0.

Vote on the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve budget adjustments for 2012-2013 as outlined in Enclosure No. 5.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

11. Public Comments and Petitions- None

12. Open Board Comment

Mrs. Brand commented that at the last meeting the Board started the practice of writing liaison reports, and if the Board is going to continue that practice, she suggested that at the end of those reports to have a motion that all written reports that were submitted be included as part of the record and minutes. Mr. Convertito stated that it could be done as a motion or could simply say on the agenda Enclosure No. 1 for SPSBC, Enclosure No. 2 for Board of Health; and they would be attached to the minutes as part of the official record.

Ms. Iacono commented that she was invited to yesterday's Rotary Luncheon to recognize high achieving seniors at our high schools. It was a lovely event and she thanked the Rotary for everything they do for our public schools

Mr. Liu asked if it is true that according to the State McKinley is in racial imbalance. Dr. Title responded that he has not received anything official. In verbal conversations with the State, preliminary figures indicate that McKinley is about where they were this time last year, just a percentage point off. When he gets something in writing he will share it with the Board and the public.

Mr. Liu stated that at the last meeting he was told the Board could get the math pilot results. Dr. Title replied that it is being worked on and the Board will receive it shortly.

13. Mr. Convertito moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:58 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Jessica Gerber  
Secretary