

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
 MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
 Tuesday, March 23, 2010

APR 27 2010

APPROVED

Minutes of the Business Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, March 23, 2010, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. John Mitola, Mr. Perry Liu, Ms. Stacey Zahn and Mrs. Pamela Iacono (arrived 7:34 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. Ann Clark and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 40 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

1. Mrs. Brand led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Mrs. Brand asked for a Point of Privilege and commented on a number of items that happened this week. A Press Release went out today announcing that Dr. David Title is the finalist for the Superintendent position. There will be an opportunity to meet with him next week. All of this information is in the Press Release. In addition, she thanked the Town officials for funding the Fairfield Woods Middle School project.

Mr. Liu, Fairfield Woods Building Committee liaison, thanked the Fairfield Woods Building Committee: Chairman Bill Sapone, Doreen Battimeilli, Victor DeMaria, Neal Fink, Richard Kornutik, Kim Marshall, Daniel McKnight, Chad Stewart and Jennifer Tierney. He also thanked Dr. Clark, all of Central Office administration, and Fairfield Woods Principal Greg Hatzis. He thanked the Board of Finance and the RTM for their support of this project as well as the PTA and parents who spent a lot of time writing letters and sending emails.

3. Recognition of Nancy Malafatopoulos-2010 National Family the Consumer Science Teacher of the Year-

Mrs. Brand introduced Ms. Malafatopoulos and announced that there will be a very special "project runway" with students modeling some of their work.

Ms. Malafatopoulos commented on being chosen as the National Family and Consumer Science Teacher of the Year. Last fall she was asked to write something about a program she started four years ago, *Turning Trash into Fashion*. Four years ago when she was asked to participate in Earth Day, she said "what, turn trash into fashion" and from there it grew every year. She presented a little "trashy" fashion show, which showcased five of her students modeling the outfits they made.

4. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Education Meeting of March 9, 2010.

A typo on the last page will be corrected.

Motion carried with the correction: 9:0:0.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of Nature's Classroom-

Dr. Clark stated that the Board received a memo from the middle school principals on March 5 outlining the trip to Nature's Classroom, whether or not it is relative to the curriculum, the cost, and the fact that some families are not able to afford it any more. A decision was made to offer other in-school programs next year for 6th graders instead of Nature's Classroom.

Each of the three middle school principals gave a little background on the program and how and why the decision was made to discontinue it.

Board comments, questions and discussion followed.

- B. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education establish Thursday, June 24, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. as the date of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School Class of 2010.

Motion Carried: 9:0:0.

6. Public Comments and Petitions-

Jenny Gillis, Riverfield parent, read a letter on behalf of parents standing in the audience and those who have signed the statement but were unable to attend this meeting. There are currently 99 children in the 4th grade at Riverfield this year and only 4 sections. The parents believe that this large class size has played a detrimental role in their children's education and urged that a fifth section be added for this class next year.

J. Alfred Dunn commented on Nature's Classroom and that he heard one of the principals talk about Underground Railroad and Egyptian culture. He asked how that link was made.

7. Reports and Recommendations-

A. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Clark announced that March is Youth Art Month and thanked Ms. Barbara Pollock for putting the display of student artwork in the Board Room.

Strategic Plan--Dr. Gary Rosato gave a brief update on the Plan. He stated that this is the second year of the five year strategic plan. There are six action committees. The Facilities Committee has been looking at energy conservation. They have been working with students and key people outside of the district looking at a solar voltaic system to put at Fairfield Warde High School. The Diversity Committee has been working on professional development to address diversity issues within the curriculum. The Community Committee is broken up into three sections: elementary, middle and high school. The elementary subcommittee has been focusing on training teachers in the Responsive Classroom methodology. Four summer academies are planned which will bring us close to having most, if not all, of our elementary teachers trained with one week of responsive classroom training. The middle schools have focused on Habits of Mind, which is a program that focuses on different character traits. They have been looking at kindness, respect, and compassion. They have developed a survey that will go out in April to parents, staff and students for feedback related to the Habits of the Mind initiative. The high school group has been working on a number of issues, and last week a Freshmen Forum on Underage Drinking was held at Fairfield Ludlowe HS and this Thursday there will be one at Fairfield Warde HS. They are looking to collect data around developing other programs based on parent and student feedback in terms of what is needed to ensure that the communities at both high schools are kind, respectful places. The Technology Committee has been working with the PD Council on developing workshops for teachers in a variety of areas and has also been working on a web-design presence that will be a collaborative site for teachers and parents to go to relative to curriculum development and finding other resources that would be helpful in the teaching process. The Communications Committee's main focus has been on developing a survey that will go out to community members throughout the district to assess the level of communication that they are receiving from the school district and to solicit feedback in terms of how we can improve. The Program Committee has a subcommittee that is looking at the Gifted and Talented Program and is hoping to bring forward a proposal in the fall that could be included in the 2011-12 budget. This Committee has also looked at the summer school program and put together a significant update for the middle school program this year. There is an elementary level subcommittee that is looking at the elementary school report card against standards that have been developed and our common assessments to make sure there is a seamless reporting across the district. All of these committees meet monthly, and there are parents on most of the committees. The meetings are posted and open to the public. Board questions followed.

NEASC--Dr. Clark reported that the faculty and administrators at Fairfield Ludlowe High School are preparing their report to NEASC about the recommendations that were made to them. Fairfield Warde High School has received a draft report which they have to react to, and they will then get a final report.

Plan to Improve Racial Imbalance--Mrs. Anna Cutaia-Leonard reported that the Cultural Diversity Task Force is moving forward with its strategies to get the word out about the opt-in to McKinley. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard and Dr. Bernardoni have attended a PTA meeting at every elementary school to give parents an opportunity to ask questions, there was an Open House at McKinley, and there have been many phone and email inquiries. The application process is open through the end of March. The Cultural Diversity Task Force itself is moving forward and looking at magnet school options or programming options at McKinley for the future and costing those out.

8. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 8:24 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary