

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MAY 25 2010

Tuesday, May 11, 2010

APPROVED

Minutes of the Education Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, May 11, 2010, at Osborn Hill Elementary School-APR.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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. Perry Liu, Mr. John Mitola, Ms. Stacey Zahn, and Mrs. Pamela Iacono (arrived 7:48 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. Ann Clark, Fairfield Ludlowe HS Student Representative Sarah Finlaw, Fairfield Warde HS Student Representative Tom Wolff and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 35 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

1. Mrs. Brand led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. CAFE Student Leadership Awards were presented to:
 - Charlotte Choinski and Brendan Sullivan – Fairfield Woods Middle School
 - Eleanor Amicucci and Anthony Johnson – Roger Ludlowe Middle School
 - Meredith Peloso and Cooper Schwabe – Tomlinson Middle School
 - Linjia Jia and Matthew Fitzburgh – Fairfield Ludlowe High School
 - Alana Scharlop and James Cimina – Fairfield Warde High School
3. The Education Meeting began at 7:38 p.m.
4. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education approve the appointment of a teacher within the Fairfield Public Schools effective July 1, 2010 with the assignment as Principal at McKinley Elementary School.

Mrs. Anna Cutaia-Leonard thanked the screening committee and introduced Dr. Ginger Vail as the recommended candidate. Dr. Vail is currently Partner Principal for the Atlanta Public Schools and previously was a special education coordinator and assistant principal in California.

A friendly amendment was made to add Dr. Ginger Vail's name to the motion. This was accepted by the mover and second.

Vote on Motion: "that the Board of Education approve the appointment of Dr. Ginger Vail, a teacher within the Fairfield Public Schools, effective July 1, 2010 with the assignment as Principal at McKinley Elementary School.

Motion carried: 8:0:1. Mrs. Iacono abstained.

5. Mr. Liu made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dow to add the Breathalyzer Policy as an item on tonight's agenda. To add an item would require a 2/3 vote.

Mr. Liu stated that the policy has been back to subcommittee, work has been done on it and he believes it can be moved forward at this time.

Board discussion followed regarding this item not having been properly noticed on the agenda, the majority of the Board members have not seen the subcommittee's work, the item was postponed to a date certain, June 8, and three days may not be enough time to get breathalyzers,

Public Comment-

Betty Ann O'Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, asked the Board to put this item on tonight's agenda.

Nancy Billington, Fleming Lane, asked the Board to discuss this and vote to enact this policy immediately.

Mr. Liu offered the following motion, seconded by Mrs. Dow: "to put the Breathalyzer Policy on the agenda for approval this evening"

Board questions and comments followed.

Motion failed: 3:6:0. Mr. Liu, Mrs. Dow, and Mrs. Brand voted in favor. Mr. Mitola, Ms. Zahn, Mrs. Iacono, Mrs. Albin, Mr. Kery, and Mr. Fattibene voted in opposition.

6. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education approve the appointment of a teacher within the Fairfield Public Schools effective July 1, 2010 with the assignment as Coordinator of Early Childhood Special Education.

Ms. Andrea Leonardi recognized and thanked the screening committee members and introduced Mrs. Kristen Downs Bruno as the recommended candidate. Ms. Leonardi stated that Mrs. Bruno is extremely energetic and has the potential to be a transformational leader. She is looking forward to July 1 when Mrs. Bruno takes over the Early Childhood Center and helps move it into the next iteration of the Early Childhood Center.

Dr. Clark stated that this was listed as a motion on the agenda, however, other than principals and headmasters, it does not require a Board vote.

The motion was withdrawn.

7. Moment of Pride-
Recognition of Rachel Finlaw, Fairfield Ludlowe High School student, who won the State Scholastic Art Gold Key Award and a Gold Award at the National Level for her photograph, Portrait of "Elsa."

Ms. Michele Hermsen, Art and Photography teacher, introduced Rachel Finlaw, a 10th grade student at Fairfield Ludlowe High School. Ms. Hermsen stated that Rachel's photograph, "Elsa," has been recognized by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers as one of the top pieces in the nation. Rachel will be awarded a National Gold Medal for her artistic achievement. As Rachel's teacher, Ms. Hermsen will receive a medal as an accomplished teacher and mentor. The medals will be awarded on June 9th at Carnegie Hall. Rachel's work will then be exhibited at the World Financial Center during the summer.

8. Mrs. Albin asked for a Moment of Personal Privilege. She commented on the earlier Board discussion regarding the proms and safety and asked that the parents at both at Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School be assured that the headmasters are clearly explaining to the students, in the assemblies, through the Prom Promise, and perhaps a letter home to the parents what you will be doing and how these dances will be handled in the absence of any other policies from the Board. That would provide notice to parents and would convey the message from the district of what is being done and what to anticipate.
9. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Education/Business Meeting of April 27, 2010.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

10. Public Comments and Petitions-
Nancy Church, on behalf of the PTAs at Fairfield Warde High School and Fairfield Ludlowe High School read a letter expressing disappointment regarding the new vending machines installed in the cafeteria. Parents were under the impression that these vending machines would allow students to eat healthy lunch/snacks that they otherwise couldn't due to their schedules. Parents were told these

machines would house sandwiches, wraps, salad choices, fruit, vegetables and other healthful options. However, the options are pop tarts, cocoa puffs cereal bars and rice krispy treats that are heavily processed and full of high fructose corn syrup. These do not represent a healthy option and are unacceptable.

11. Presentations-

A. First Read of Policy #3270.1 – Gifts

Mr. Boyle stated that this policy has been revised to be more specific, requiring gifts in excess of \$500 to be approved by very specific people in the administration, that is, a headmaster, principal or central office administrator before acceptance of the gift; and all gifts after acceptance may be reallocated between schools to remedy a clear educational inequity upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

Board questions and comments followed regarding determining approval of the gift by the principal, headmaster or central office administrator, how the principal or headmaster knows that the gift coming to their school is equitable to their counterparts throughout the district, the rationale for taking out language, the clarity of language that has been added and reallocating of gifts that are given to a particular school because it causes an inequity.

This policy will go back to subcommittee for further review and revision.

B. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education approve applying for the Race to the Top Grant and authorize the Superintendent and the Board of Education Chairman to sign off on the Memo of Understanding.

Dr. Clark stated that the Board has received a copy of the Memo of Understanding. If we are going to indicate our interest in participating, the MOU also requires the signature of the FEA President. Dr. Clark stated that she believes Fairfield should apply or at least indicate an interest in wanting to move forward. Many of the items in the first application have been removed, many of the areas we have to indicate that we are working on are things we are already doing, and some of the areas have already been established as law with timelines, such as the change in graduation requirements, teacher effectiveness, a new evaluation system, and implementing CALI in the schools. Dr. Clark stated that she asked the three members of the legislature who were at the PTA Council meeting last night if Connecticut doesn't get the funding would they roll back the legislative requirements they put in place and take them off the books, and they said "no." Dr. Clark stated that since the body of the Race to the Top Grant needs to be done by law, Fairfield should apply.

A friendly amendment was made to include the signature of the FEA President to the motion. This was accepted by the mover and second. Board comments followed. Since the Board of Education has no jurisdiction over the FEA, the friendly amendment was withdrawn. Dr. Clark stated that everyone should know that the application is not complete without the FEA President's signature.

Approximately 30 minutes of Board questions and comments followed.

Public Comment-

J. Alfred Dunn stated that he was flabbergasted when he heard that we were going to get into this. The last time he heard about it, it would not benefit Fairfield. The individuals who are pushing this change are going to do it and you might as well get used to it; we are going to go into the 21st century screaming and kicking.

Motion carried: 6:2:1. Mr. Liu, Mr. Mitola, Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Brand, Mr. Fattibene, and Mrs. Iacono voted in favor. Ms. Zahn and Mr. Kery voted in opposition. Mrs. Albin abstained.

12. Reports and Recommendations-

- ◆ Sarah Finlaw reported that Fairfield Ludlowe High School has been taking AP exams last week and this week. The Senior Intern Program starts next Thursday. May 25th is the National Honor Society induction for new members and seniors get recognized and receive their graduation cords.
- ◆ Tom Wolff reported that Fairfield Warde High School has been working through AP exams, the spring musical, *Into the Woods*, was performed recently, the senior music awards concert will be this Thursday, and progress reports go out this week. This Friday is the annual Warde/Ludlowe baseball game held at Harbor Yard. The Junior Prom is May 22nd and June 5th is the Senior Prom. Two weekends ago a student at Warde, Allie Taikowski, and her mother ran a breast cancer benefit called "Catwalk for a Cure" at Brooklawn Country Club, which involved students from Warde, Ludlowe, and Fairfield Prep.
- ◆ Mrs. Albin--No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that she was asked by the Director of CES to review that CES covers 16 districts, includes the Regional Center for the Arts, Special Ed services both on site and off, Six to Six Magnet School, professional services as well as policy and search committees and educational programs. Board of Health—H1N1 is winding down, and vaccines are being returning. There is prep for summer school with the nursing staff and a presentation was held at North Stratfield School about head lice. The testing summary for mercury at Stratfield School is being prepared. School gardens are springing up and the Health Department is working with the central office staff and the person in charge of the Health curriculum to review and monitor the protocol. They will also work with the students to teach them how make sure they are following the protocol.
- ◆ Mrs. Dow reported that SEPTA will meet tomorrow evening, and retiring ECC Director Marlene Cavagnuolo will receive the Friend of SEPTA Award. Last month there was a presentation by Probate Judge Dan Caruso on guardianship and conservatorship for children with special needs once they reach 18. Next Thursday, May 20, between 5-8 p.m. SEPTA will receive 15% of sales for eat in or take out at Friendly's. Some of the money earned in the past is being used as grants. Two teachers were just awarded a grant to attend the UCONN Confratstute professional development program on July 11-16, which is about enrichment, learning and teaching strategies for teachers so they can meet the needs of gifted and talented children.
- ◆ Mr. Fattibene--No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Iacono reported that the Finance, Budget, and Community Relations subcommittee is working on recommendations pertaining to the \$3 million budget cut. Positive news was received this morning; in our medical insurance reduction we were able to add \$600,000 to that line so we are now looking at \$1.6 million that can be used to offset the \$3 million cut. The committee is putting together a spreadsheet of recommendations for full Board review at the next Board meeting. The Special Projects Standing Building Committee is in a holding pattern. Items left on the checklist at Osborn Hill and Roger Sherman are a tree that needs to be planted at Sherman, caulking that needs to be done at both schools, and the biggest item is some drainage issues at Osborn Hill and Sherman. An engineer has been hired to assess that, and we are in the process of possibly having to hire a surveyor to look at the pitch of the asphalt and the way it was laid to figure out why things are draining the way they are. The next meeting is May 24. The RTM adopted the town budget and decided not to make further cuts to the education budget.
- ◆ Mr. Kery reported that PTA Council has started a new committee, the Green Team Committee, to look at greening the schools. At the last meeting they transitioned to the new officers for next year: President-Mary Hogue, Past President-Charlotte Leslie, VP Programs-Neal Fink, VP Curriculum-Lenora Campbell, VP Leadership-Richard Joslin, VP Legislation and Membership-Julie Gottlieb, Treasurer-Debbie Blanchard, Corresponding Secretary-Leann Ratner, Recording Secretary-Michelle Lindsay and the BOE Reps-Lisa Havey and Nancy Schutte. There was also discussion with State Senator McKinney and State Reps Fawcett and Hwang who indicated there is a \$3-\$3.5 billion deficit on an \$18 billion budget coming up next year at the state. This year the budget was fixed by borrowing money which has to be paid down. They indicated that pilot program payments would likely be cut moving forward, state construction projects and the reimbursement levels should remain in place and we should not worry about the projects we have going on in terms of that reimbursement. Mr. Kery commented that the Board needs to have

some discussions about governance, especially about grants and monies that come from the state and federal level based on the economic circumstances we are facing. The Facilities, Technology and Long-Term Planning Committee will be discussing the feeder pattern for middle schools on May 18; as a forewarning to parents, that equals redistricting. The committee has approved Facilities Planning Principles which will be brought before this Board at a future meeting. It is basically a template for plans to be measured against. Additionally, the committee has an open RFI to find alternate enrollment methodologies that will focus on more accuracy at the building level and smaller variances over the long term. At the last meeting the committee received a report on alternate uses of spaces in all of our 16 buildings. Mr. Kery commented on a number of items of concern that came up at the last meeting. Our buildings can either use natural gas or oil/diesel to fuel the boilers in the winter. For last two years natural gas has been used which has created a situation where there are thousands of gallons of diesel in tanks that is turning to sludge. It will have to be thinned out before it can run through the boilers, and there could be a cost associated with that. This is a problem that is shared by the Town, and Mr. Cullen will work with the Town on this. It was the sense of the body that the Chair send a letter to the First Selectman with copies to the other two Selectmen about the Board's concern and that we would like to work together with town to find an economical way to relieve this. Mr. Kery commented on including this in the budgeting process. Board discussion followed on this item. Another item of concern is the lease at St. Emery's for the Alternative High School. A request was made to the First Selectmen but his response did not give all of the information needed. We have some assurances that he is working to get the lease renewed, but if that does not happen we will have 13 months to relocate the Alternative High School. Another issue is an outstanding request for capital improvement at Sherman, and there has been no response from the First Selectman on that. The Central Office lease is another concern. Mr. Cullen stated that the lease for Central Office at 501 Kings Highway has a caveat that 18 months before the option is up we have the right to talk to the owner of the building about renegotiating a new lease or other options. That would be May or June 2011. It was the sense of the Board that Mrs. Brand will send a letter to the First Selectman on these three issues with copies to the other two Selectmen and the Board of Ed.

- ◆ Mr. Liu reported that the Fairfield Woods Middle School Building Committee met on Thursday. Mr. Cullen reported that the committee is investigating procedures to go to Planning and Zoning for the site work. CM interviews were conducted and Melkin Construction was picked. They are also doing Stratfield. Most of the design work is in progress.
- ◆ Mr. Mitola reported that the Stratfield project is moving along. The frame is up and they are putting the brick up. There was a concern about four classrooms that can't open their windows because of dust and noise so the building committee approved four air conditioning units for those classrooms. The cornerstone will be donated by the mason. There was a discussion about whether to install the gym floor this summer but it was decided to wait until next year because there was concern about whether it would be done in time for the opening of school. Phase 5, FF&E is out to bid. The construction manager was commissioned to hire an independent roofing company to inspect the roof at the school.
- ◆ Ms. Zahn reported that Curriculum, Policy and Special Programs Committee will meet on June 2. The High School Scholarship Foundation held a first time "Woman's Night Out" at the Community Theater. It was very well received and raised a lot of money for the Scholarship Foundation. The Foundation is thinking about doing an Evening to Honor Excellence in the fall. High School students are currently being interviewed for scholarships. Parks & Rec meets tomorrow night. Six to Six meets next Thursday morning. Fairfield Ludlowe High School recently did the *Music Man* musical, which was a fabulous play. Ms. Zahn thanked Osborn Hill for hosting the meeting tonight.

13. Open Board Discussion-

Mrs. Iacono asked about the vending machines. Dr. Clark stated that she believes that all of the snack items have been pulled. Mr. Cullen stated that the intent was to have healthy foods in the vending machines and there were some on the top row. The vending machines broke down and the healthy foods had to be removed because they were rotting. Dr. Clark stated that the problem at Fairfield Ludlowe was that the vending machines were made so students could punch in their code, get their snack and their account would be charged. However, some very creative students kept punching until

they got a code and a child at the middle school got an exorbitant bill. That machine is out of commission and the company is trying to produce a machine that would be student proof. The vending machines were put in because many students do not have an opportunity to have lunch; these are actually considered bundled meals.

Mrs. Albin stated that on June 10th there will be a retirement party to celebrate Dr. Clark's eight years in Fairfield. Anyone who would like information can contact Mrs. Albin via her Board email address.

Mrs. Brand commented that she met with Dr. Clark on Thursday to discuss transition issues and if there was anything Dr. Clark wanted on the agenda during the next several Board meetings as well as items the Board could do to help facilitate the process. Dr. Title would like to have Board members involved in a Roles and Responsibilities CABE program. Mrs. Brand asked Board members to check their schedules to see if it is possible. Dr. Title is aware of the budget updates and is now receiving the Friday Packet.

14. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:54 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary