

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Policy Committee Meeting
Monday, August 26, 2019
5:00 PM
501 Kings Highway East
Instructional Conference Room

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of June 18, 2019 minutes
- III. Policy
 - a. Discussion of New Legislation
 - b. Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students
 - c. Board of Education Handbook
- IV. Future Items
 - a. School Calendar
 - b. Students with Special Health Care Needs
 - c. Parent Organizations and Booster Clubs
 - d. Cell Phone Use in Schools
- V. Open Discussion/Public Comment
- VI. Adjournment

Future Meetings: September 3, September 17, October 1, October 15, November 26, December 3

All meetings will be held at 501 Kings Highway East, Superintendent's Conference Room unless otherwise noted.

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Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 18, 2019
5:00 PM
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Minutes

- Meeting called to order 5:05 PM
 - Present were Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Jennifer Jacobson, Jeff Peterson, Mike Cummings, Bob Smoler, Kristen Tozzo, and 3 members of the public
- June 4, 2019 minutes approved 3-0
- Policy
 - Homework
 - Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly provided feedback from past policy meetings and public comment from the Board of Education first read of the policy. There was no additional language changes from the school administrators. Updates were made and the revised policy was voted out of the committee 3-0 for a vote by the Board.
- Public Comment
 - Jennifer Neal Hoffman, Parent: Wanted to note that for many students, including her daughter, the current Homework policy did work for highly motivated students and their opinions weren't being heard. Some students found it very helpful knowing what assignments were formative vs. summative and how they would count toward their grade. Her daughter felt that student feedback regarding the new policy would be helpful. There is a lot of stress surrounding other classes and activities and knowing they have a choice over whether or not to do a specific assignment is helpful. This flexibility is very important.
- Meeting adjourned 7:45 PM



2019 SESSION

In its 2019 regular and special sessions, the General Assembly made a number of changes in the statutes that affect public education in Connecticut. This summary is intended to give you a brief overview of some of the more significant changes that were made this year in the area of education. Links to the new legislation are provided in the electronic version of this publication located at <https://bit.ly/2MFndHP>. In addition, for more information about new legislation affecting employers in general, please see our Employment Legislation Summary at: <https://bit.ly/2MP6t0D>.

STATUTORY CHANGES AFFECTING STUDENTS:

Access to Education by Homeless Students

Public Act 19-179 increases protections afforded to homeless students and makes several changes to current laws concerning the appeal process afforded to school-age homeless students who are denied access to school accommodations to attend a local or regional public school.

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that homeless children and youth be provided with educational services that are comparable to those provided to the other students enrolled in the same school, including transportation services. Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-186 currently requires boards to notify a parent, guardian, emancipated minor or pupil 18 years of age or older of the right to request a hearing whenever a board denies access to school accommodations, including on the basis of residency. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 1 of the Act adds the term “unaccompanied youth” (defined by federal law as “a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian”) to the list of parties entitled to all of the rights relating to

school accommodation hearing procedures, including, for example, a right to request a hearing, and a right to appeal an adverse decision.

Regarding such hearings, Section 1 of the Act modifies the burden of proof in residency hearings where the child claims to be homeless. Generally, a party denied access to school accommodations based on residency has the burden of proof and must establish residency by a preponderance of the evidence (*i.e.*, it is more likely than not). Effective July 1, 2019, however, when “the party denied schooling is claiming that he or she is a homeless child or youth,” the board will have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the student is not homeless in accordance with McKinney-Vento.

In addition, in the event a board of education (or impartial hearing officer) determines that a homeless child or youth is not entitled to school accommodations in the district, Section 1 of the Act also permits such homeless child or youth to remain in the district or be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the student in the school district in accordance with federal

law that permits a student to maintain enrollment pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. Additionally, boards will need to (1) provide such student or the parent or guardian a written explanation of the reasons for the denial that is in a manner and form understandable to them, (2) provide information regarding the right to appeal the decision of the denial of accommodations and (3) refer such student, parent or guardian to the district's homeless liaison. Moreover, a new provision requires that any homeless child or youth appealing a denial of school accommodations on the basis of residency be entitled to continue to attend school in the school district during the pendency of all available appeals, rather than just through an appeal at the State Board of Education ("State Board") level.

Section 2 of the Act additionally amends Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-253 to reiterate that when a board of education denies a homeless child or youth school accommodations on the basis of residency, the homeless child or youth is entitled to a residency hearing pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-186.

Sale and Use of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products and E-Cigarettes

Effective October 1, 2019, **Public Act 19-13** makes significant changes to current law regarding the sale, use and distribution of cigarettes, other tobacco products and e-cigarettes. Most critically, it raises the legal age to purchase such products from eighteen to twenty-one and amends Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 19a-342 and 19a-342a to prohibit smoking and the use of e-cigarettes within school buildings or on school property at all times, rather than only within a building while school is in session or during student activities. (Sections 17 and 18).

Application of Sunscreen Before Outdoor Activities

Currently, the law does not specifically address the use of sunscreen in school. Consequently, its application is generally subject to the same procedures as over-the-counter medication, which requires a written order from an authorized health care provider and written authorization from the student's parent or guardian for administration in school. **Public Act 19-60** provides that effective July 1, 2019, any student who is six years of age or older may possess and self-apply over-the-counter sunscreen while in school prior to engaging in any outdoor activity, if a student's parent or guardian submits a written authorization to the school nurse. The Act further permits boards of education to adopt policies and procedures to implement this new provision, and a student's self-application of sunscreen in school must be in accordance with such policies and procedures.

Physical Exercise and Undirected Play

In 2012, the legislature established a minimum requirement of 20 minutes daily physical exercise for students in grades K-5.

The following year, this requirement expanded from grades K-5 to all students enrolled in elementary school, and boards of education were required to develop a policy regarding school employees preventing a student from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise as a form of discipline.

This year, effective July 1, 2019 through **Public Act 19-173**, the legislature clarified the authority of local and regional boards to include additional

time—beyond the 20 minutes required for physical exercise—devoted to undirected play during the regular school day in elementary schools. Consistent with prior legislative action, the Act further requires that boards of education revise their policies by October 1, 2019 to address school employees preventing a student from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise or undirected play as a form of discipline.

Section 2 of the Act also establishes a task force to study the feasibility of including time devoted to undirected play during the regular school day in elementary schools and to report its findings to the Education Committee by January 1, 2020.

Special Education Transition Services for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq.) requires that the first IEP in effect when a child with a disability turns sixteen years of age (or earlier, when appropriate) include (1) appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education employment and where appropriate, independent living skills; and (2) the transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. 20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII).

Public Act 19-49, effective July 1, 2019, requires IEPs for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder to contain such postsecondary goals and transition services beginning no later than the date on which the IEP takes effect for any such student who is at least fourteen years old. The Act requires such students' IEPs to be updated annually thereafter. Finally, the Act clarifies that despite the obligation for boards of education to begin transition services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder at age fourteen, the Act does not require the Department of

Rehabilitation Services to lower the age of transitional services for children with disabilities from sixteen to fourteen.

Expulsions

Section 9 of **Public Act 19-91**, effective July 1, 2019, narrows the authority of boards of education to expel students in grades three through twelve, in a board's discretion, for conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity to situations in which the conduct violates a publicized policy of such board **and** is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or endangers persons or property. Previously, boards could expel students in grades three through twelve, in the board's discretion, if the conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity violated a publicized policy of the board **or** was seriously disruptive of the educational process or endangered persons or property. The Act does not modify the standards for expulsion for conduct off school grounds or for mandatory expulsions.

New Curriculum and Course Requirements for African-American and Black Studies and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies

Sections 1 and 2 of **Public Act 19-12** provide that, for the school year commencing July 1, 2021, public schools must include African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies as part of the program of instruction for the school district. In accordance with the Act, the State Board must make available curriculum materials for African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies, and districts may use those materials or other materials in implementing the curriculum. The Act also permits districts to accept gifts, grants, and donations designed for the development and implementation of

the African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies curriculum required by the Act.

In addition to the inclusion of African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies in each district's program of instruction, Sections 3 and 4 of the Act require the State Education Resource Center ("SERC") to develop a one-credit black and Latino studies course to be offered at the high school level. By January 1, 2021, the State Board must review and approve the black and Latino studies course developed by SERC, provided the State Board determines that the course meets criteria set forth in the law, and must submit a course description to the General Assembly by January 15, 2021. School districts *may* offer this course in grades nine through twelve for the 2021-2022 school year, but *must* offer the course in those grades for the 2022-2023 school year and each school year thereafter. For the school years commencing July 1, 2022 to July 1, 2024, the State Department of Education ("SDE") will conduct an annual audit to ensure that the approved black and Latino studies course is being offered by each school district and will submit a report on the audit to the General Assembly.

Computer Science Instruction

Section 1 of **Public Act 19-128** amends various statutes and generally highlights the legislature's desire to strengthen computer science instruction in public schools. In particular, Section 1 of the Act, effective July 1, 2019, broadens the current curricular requirement of "computer programming," specifically, to "computer science," generally, which may include computer programming. In addition, Section 11 provides that, on or after July 1, 2020, consideration must be given to career and academic choices in computer science, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in student success plans.

Firearm Safety Programs

Previously, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-18c permitted local and regional boards of education to offer firearm safety programs to students in grades K-8. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 5 of **Public Act 19-5** expands the grades to which the program may be made available by permitting boards of education to offer firearm safety programs to grades K-12. The Act retains a curricular opt-out whereby parents and guardians may request that their child be exempted from the program or any portion thereof by providing written notification to the school, and schools must provide an opportunity for other academic work during that time. Section 4 of the Act specifies that, subject to available appropriations, the State Board must develop guides to aid boards of education in developing such firearm safety programs for students in grades K-12.

Promoting Careers in Manufacturing

Section 1 of **Public Act 19-58**, effective July 1, 2019, confirms that guidance counselors and school counselors may provide materials concerning manufacturing, military, and law enforcement careers when discussing career options with students.

Section 2 of the Act, effective July 1, 2019, requires that each board of education include goals for career placement for students who do not pursue an advanced degree immediately after graduation in such board's statement of educational goals for the district.

Section 3, also effective July 1, 2019, requires that each student success plan, beginning in grade six, provide evidence of career exploration in each grade including, but not limited to, careers in manufacturing. SDE will revise and issue guidance regarding these changes to student success plans.

Lastly, the Act establishes a study relating to the demand for career and technical education teachers in the state's high schools and community colleges. The report is due February 1, 2020.

Working Papers

Current law requires that the Superintendent, or designee, of any local or regional board of education provide a "certificate of age" as verification of a minor's legal age for purposes of employment in certain occupations. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 97 of **Public Act 19-117** clarifies that such requirements do not apply to individuals desiring to employ a minor through a youth development program of a regional workforce development board.

STATUTORY CHANGES AFFECTING SCHOOL DISTRICT OPERATION:

Employee Background Checks & Fingerprinting

Public Act 19-91, effective July 1, 2019, overhauls the employee background checks statute. The Act adds a definition of "eligible school operator," which includes local and regional boards of education, the Technical Education and Career System, the governing council of a state or local charter school, a school developed through a statutorily permitted cooperative arrangement, and a government-operated interdistrict magnet school. In addition to the existing background check requirements for eligible school operators, the Act adds a requirement that eligible school operators require applicants to state, *in writing*, whether such applicant has ever been convicted of a crime or whether criminal charges are pending against the applicant at the time of the application. If charges are

pending, the applicant must state the charges and the court in which such charges are pending.

The Act continues the option for an eligible school operator to request a regional educational service center ("RESC") to arrange for the fingerprinting of any person required to submit to state and national criminal history records checks. The State Police Bureau of Identification will then provide the results of such checks directly to the eligible school operator.

Section 2 of the Act adds another new term, "nongovernmental school operator," which means an operator of an interdistrict magnet school that: is a third-party, not-for-profit corporation approved by the Commissioner of Education; the governing council of a state or local charter school; an endowed or incorporated academy approved by the State Board; a special education facility approved by the State Board; or the supervisory agent of a nonpublic school. [Note: Governing councils of a state or local charter school are included in both the definitions of eligible school operator and nongovernmental school operator.] Such nongovernmental school operator must conduct the same employee background checks that are required of public schools. These requirements include, among other things, requiring each applicant to:

- (1) State in writing whether such applicant has ever been convicted of a crime or whether criminal charges are pending against such applicant at the time of the application and, if charges are pending, to state the charges and the court in which charges are pending;
- (2) Submit to a records check of the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") child abuse and neglect registry before being hired; and
- (3) Submit to state and national criminal history records checks within thirty days from the date of employment, which checks *must* be conducted

through the State Police in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 29-17a.

A nongovernmental school operator may similarly request for a RESC to arrange for the fingerprinting of any person required to submit to state and national criminal history records checks.

As is the case for public schools, the Act provides that a state and national criminal records check completed for a substitute teacher within one year prior to employment with a nongovernmental school operator satisfies the background check requirements.

A nongovernmental school operator may not, however, require substitute teachers to submit to state and national criminal history records checks if they are “continuously employed,” which is defined as “employ[ment] at least one day of each school year by such nongovernmental school operator,” as long as substitute teachers are subjected to checks every five years. Furthermore, the background check provisions do not apply to (1) a student employed by the nongovernmental school operator that operates a school which the student attends, or (2) a person employed by a nongovernmental school operator as a teacher for a noncredit adult class or adult education activity who is not required to hold a teaching certificate.

Section 3 mandates that eligible school operators and nongovernmental school operators require students enrolled in teacher preparation programs, and completing his or her student teaching experience with such eligible school operator or nongovernmental school operator, to (1) state any convictions or pending charges in writing, and if charges are pending, the charges and court in which the charges are pending, (2) submit to a DCF records check, and (3) submit to state and national criminal history records checks. Students in teacher preparation programs must submit

to the state and national records checks within sixty days from the date the student begins to perform the student teaching experience. Notably, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection must waive the fee for a criminal history records check for student teachers.

Section 4 expressly provides that eligible school operators and nongovernmental school operators also **may** conduct the same above-mentioned background checks for non-employees who will perform a service involving direct contact with students.

Section 5 requires, among other things, the State Board to submit periodically to the State Police Bureau of Identification a database providing identification information of each applicant to the State Board seeking an initial certificate, authorization, or permit. The State Police Bureau of Identification shall then notify the State Board of any applicant who has a criminal conviction, and the State Board may deny an application pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145b(i). The State Board must also submit a database providing the identification of each person who holds a certificate, authorization or permit. Upon information that any such person has a criminal conviction, the State Board may revoke that person’s certificate, authorization, or permit.

Importantly, the Act clarifies, in various sections, that recipients of national criminal history records check information shall not disseminate further the results of such checks.

Sexual Harassment

Public Acts 19-16 and 19-93, effective October 1, 2019, make various changes concerning sexual harassment, sexual assault, discrimination complaints filed with the Commission on Human Rights and

Opportunities (“CHRO”), and related matters. Among other things, the new Acts expand requirements for employers to train employees on sexual harassment laws, extend the time to file a CHRO complaint alleging employer discrimination, including sexual harassment, and allow courts to order punitive damages in discrimination cases that the CHRO has released from its jurisdiction.

Current law requires employers with at least 50 employees to provide their supervisory employees with two hours of training on federal and state sexual harassment laws and remedies available to victims. Section 1 of Public Act 19-16 expands this requirement to cover (1) employers of **any** size and (2) **non-supervisory employees** for employers with at least three employees. The Act requires the new training to occur within one year of October 1, 2019, except that any employer who provided the bill’s training to any such employees after October 1, 2018, is not required to provide it a second time.

The Act requires the CHRO to develop and make available to employers a free, online training and education video or other interactive method that fulfills the Act’s training requirements, although there is no deadline associated with this mandate. Employers having three or more employees, must provide the required training to employees hired on or after October 1, 2019 within six months of hire if the CHRO has developed and made available its online training materials. Public Act 19-16 does not address the scenario for training requirements for employees hired on or after October 1, 2019 if the CHRO does not make the training materials available to be used within six months of an employee’s hire, but presumably employers would need to ensure those new employees at least receive the requisite training by October 1, 2020 in the absence of such CHRO materials consistent with the requirement for existing employees.

Under the Act, employers required to provide this training must provide supplemental training at least every 10 years to update employees on the content of the training and education. As amended by Section 5 of Public Act 19-93, the Act subjects employers to a fine of up to \$750 if they fail to provide the training and education as required. In addition, the new Act additionally classifies this inaction as a discriminatory practice. By expanding the definition of discriminatory practice, the Act allows individuals aggrieved by any such violation of the training requirements, or CHRO itself, to file a complaint with CHRO alleging discrimination.

Existing law requires employers with three or more employees to post in a prominent and accessible place a notice stating that sexual harassment is illegal and the remedies available to victims. Section 1 of Public Act 19-16 requires these employers to also send a copy of this information to employees by email within three months of their hire if the (1) employer has provided an email account to the employee or (2) employee has provided the employer with an email address. The email’s subject line must be similar to “Sexual Harassment Policy.” If an employer has not provided email accounts to employees, it must post the information on its website, if it has one. As outlined above, employers are subject to a fine of up to \$750 for failure to comply with these requirements.

The CHRO must develop and include on its website a link about the illegality of sexual harassment and the remedies available to victims. An employer can comply with the requirement above by providing this link to employees by email, text message or in writing.

Section 8 of Public Act 19-16, as amended by Section 5 of Public Act 19-93, effective October 1, 2019, provides that during the twelve-month period following the date on which a complaint was filed

against the employer, or if the executive director of the CHRO reasonably believes that an employer is in violation of the training and information posting requirements described above, the CHRO's executive director will now have the authority to assign designated representatives to enter an employer's business location, during normal business hours, to ensure compliance with these requirements. The designated representatives may also examine the employers' records, policies, procedures, postings, and sexual harassment training materials to ensure compliance with these posting requirements and the sexual harassment training requirements described above. Fortunately, the Act requires these designated representatives, when carrying out these duties, to ensure they do not unduly disrupt the employers' business operations.

Lastly, Section 4 of Public Act 19-16, effective October 1, 2019 provides that if an employer takes immediate corrective action in response to an employee's claim of sexual harassment, such corrective action may not modify the conditions of employment of the employee making the claim unless such employee agrees, **in writing**, to any modification in the conditions of employment. As defined in the Act, "corrective action" includes, but is not limited to, employee relocation, assigning an employee to a different work schedule, or other substantive changes to an employee's terms and conditions of employment. Section 8 of Public Act 19-96 further provides, however, that notwithstanding an employer's failure to obtain such written agreement from the employee regarding a modification in the conditions of employment, the CHRO may find that corrective action taken by an employer was reasonable and not of detriment to the complainant based on the evidence presented to the CHRO.

Safe School Climate

Public Act 19-166 makes several changes to current laws related to bullying and safe school climate. Section 1 of the Act establishes a statewide "social and emotional learning and school climate advisory collaborative" to, among other things, collect information relative to school climate improvement and to identify best practices for promoting positive school climates. Key roles of the advisory collaborative, among others, as identified by Sections 1 and 2 of the Act, are to (1) develop a model positive school climate policy by January 1, 2020, (2) develop an assessment for screening students in grades three to twelve for suicide risk, (3) develop a plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available to parents and guardians under the Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-4b complaint process and provide it to each local and regional board of education, and (4) develop a biennial statewide school climate survey.

Key dates related to the work of the advisory collaborative and corresponding responsibilities of boards of education include:

- January 1, 2020: The advisory collaborative must develop the model positive school climate policy;
- July 1, 2020: The advisory collaborative must submit the screening assessment to determine risk of suicide and recommendations for implementation in public schools;
- January 1, 2021: The advisory collaborative must provide the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available through the Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-4b complaint process to each board of education;
- January 1, 2021 and annually thereafter: The advisory collaborative must submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the efforts of the advisory collaborative concerning improving school climate, the need for technical assistance

- for school districts, best practices, directing resources for state and local initiatives and any recommendations;
- June 30, 2021: Each board of education must publish on its website the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under the Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-4b complaint process;
 - July 1, 2021: The advisory collaborative must develop the biennial statewide school climate survey designed to obtain confidential information from school employees and parents and guardians concerning impressions of school climate; and
 - August 1, 2021: SDE must publish the model positive school climate policy and the biennial statewide school climate survey on the SDE website.

In addition, Section 3, effective July 1, 2021, makes substantial revisions to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d, the statute governing safe school climate plans and public schools' bullying policies and obligations.

Section 3 redefines "school climate" to mean "the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students', parents' and guardians' and school employees' experiences of school life, including, but not limited to, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures."

Section 3 also creates three new statutory definitions:

- (1) "Positive school climate" means a school climate in which
 - (a) the norms, values, expectations and beliefs that support feelings of social, emotional and physical safety are promoted,
 - (b) students, parents and guardians of students and school employees feel engaged and

- respected and work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision,
 - (c) educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning, and
 - (d) each person feels comfortable contributing to the operation of the school and care of the physical environment of the school

- (2) "Emotional intelligence" means the ability to
 - (a) perceive, recognize and understand emotions in oneself or others,
 - (b) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication,
 - (c) understand and identify emotions, and
 - (d) manage emotions in oneself and others; and

- (3) "Social and emotional learning" means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Most significantly, however, Section 3 of the Act redefines the term "bullying." Currently, bullying is defined as:

- (A) the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral, or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or (B) a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same district, that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property, (ii) places such student in reasonable fear

of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for such student, (iv) infringes on the rights of such student at school, or (v) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Effective July 1, 2021, the Act defines “bullying” to mean

An act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which (A) causes physical or emotional harm to an individual, (B) places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or (C) infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

The revised definition of “bullying,” however, retains the current statutory language confirming that bullying includes, but need not be limited to:

a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Notably, the Act removes the explicit requirements within the current definition of bullying that both the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim be students attending school in the same school district. Additionally, the Act removes the current requirement that the Act be “repetitive” in nature and instead establishes a new, hostile environment harassment-like standard by requiring that the Act be “severe, persistent and pervasive.”

Section 3 also amends the requirements for safe school climate plans required for each board of education. Currently, safe school climate plans must require a school to notify the parent or guardian of both students who commit verified acts of bullying and students who were victims of such acts within forty-eight hours after completing its bullying investigation. Section 3 expands this requirement to specify that such notice to parents or guardians must include (a) notice of the results of the bullying investigation and (b) verbal and email (if the parent’s or guardian’s email address is known) notice to the parents or guardians that they may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under the Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-4b complaint process published on the district’s website.

Again, as noted above, the effective date for the new and revised statutory terms and new requirements for safe school climate plans is July 1, 2021. Therefore, districts are not required to revise their safe school climate plans or bullying policies immediately.

Finally, Section 5 of the Act, effective July 1, 2019, requires that each local and regional board of education, in consultation with SDE and the advisory collaborative, provide on the Department’s website training materials to school administrators regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on such students’ (1) actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identify or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance or mental, physical developmental or sensory disability, or (2) association with individuals or groups who have or are perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Public Act 19-166 raises numerous questions about how boards of education will implement these new

requirements as they become effective. This is particularly true with respect to the new definition of bullying that seems to lack any clarity with respect to the limits of school districts' obligations or authority to address conduct by individuals who may or may not be students, let alone have a connection to the district.

Importantly, as referenced above, the statutory definitions and many of the other school district obligations (with the exception of the requirement for training materials regarding discrimination required by Section 5) are not effective for the 2019-2020 school year. Based on the work of the advisory collaborative and other factors, it is possible that the General Assembly will further amend these provisions before they take effect. Nevertheless, school and district leaders should be aware of and appropriately prepare for the requirements that, at least at this point, will become effective in the near future.

Firm Graduation Date

Section 10-16/ of the Connecticut General Statutes had permitted boards of education to set a firm graduation date that fell no earlier than the 185th day noted in the school calendar adopted for that year, but also permitted boards to set a firm graduation date on or after April 1 that, at the time of its establishment, provided for at least 180 days of school. Effective July 1, 2019, **Public Act 19-195** amends Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-16/ to permit boards to establish a firm graduation date at any time during the school year, provided that the date chosen falls no earlier than the 180th day noted in the school calendar adopted for that year.

Fast Track Tenure in Priority School Districts

Since 2010, a certified teacher or administrator employed in a priority school district could attain

tenure after 10 months of employment in the priority school district if the individual previously attained tenure with another local or regional board of education in Connecticut or another state. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 2 of **Public Act 19-139** repeals such expedited tenure provision. As a result, teachers and administrators employed in priority school districts will be subject to the same tenure provisions as other certified staff.

School Security and Safety

Since 2014, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection ("DESPP") has been required to develop school security and safety plan standards in consultation with SDE. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, boards of education have been required to develop and update school security and safety plans for the district and/or each school within the district.

Section 1 of **Public Act 19-52** requires DESPP, in consultation with SDE, to reevaluate and update the school security and safety plan standards by January 1, 2020, and every three years thereafter. SDE is further required to distribute such standards to all public schools within the state. As discussed below, **Public Act 19-184** separately requires DESPP to revise the school security and safety plan standards by October 1, 2019 to include provisions relating to emergency communication plans for students with hearing impairments.

In addition, Section 2 of the Act requires DESPP to seek ways to simplify the documentation required by boards of education to comply with school safety and security reporting requirements. Such required documentation currently includes the school's security and safety plan, as well as annual reports regarding fire and crisis response drills. By January 1, 2020, DESPP must submit a report identifying the key components

of such documentation and outlining how the department will simplify the required documentation. DESPP will then implement the new requirements for documentation not later than July 1, 2020. A similar provision, with the same timelines, requires DESPP and the School Safety Infrastructure Council to seek ways to simplify the documentation required for applicants of the school security infrastructure competitive grant program.

Lastly, Section 3 of the Act, effective October 1, 2019, requires DESPP to develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants operating in Connecticut to include on its registry of such consultants, which, under current law, must be updated at least annually and must be publicly available.

School Police and Federal Immigration Authorities

Public Act 19-20, effective October 1, 2019, revises the responsibilities of state law enforcement and defines such responsibilities for school police or security departments with respect to federal immigration authorities, including the United States Immigrations and Customs Enforcement and the United States Customs and Border Protection. For the purposes of this Act, school police or security departments mean any police or security department of the constituent units of the state system of higher education, a public school or a local or regional school district.

Specifically, Section (b)(1)(A) provides that no school police or security department within a public school is permitted to arrest or detain an individual pursuant to a civil immigration detainer (a request from a federal immigration authority to detain or facilitate the arrest of an individual) unless the detainer is accompanied by a warrant issued or signed by a judicial officer.

In addition, Section (b)(1)(B) prohibits public school police or security departments from expending or using time, money, facilities, property, equipment, personnel or other resources to communicate with a federal immigration authority regarding the custody status or release of an individual targeted by a civil immigration detainer.

Furthermore, public school police or security departments may not arrest or detain an individual based on an administrative warrant (which is a warrant issued by a federal immigration enforcement agent, rather than by a judicial officer); give a federal immigration authority access to interview an individual who is in the custody of a law enforcement agency; or perform any function of a federal immigration authority.

Operations Relating to Special Education and Students with Disabilities

Public Act 19-184 makes several changes to current laws related to the provision of special education.

Section 1 of the Act, effective July 1, 2019, prohibits administrators from disciplining or retaliating against any staff members for communications about student programming at planning and placement team (“PPT”) meetings. Specifically, the Act provides that, “no local or regional board of education shall discipline, suspend, terminate, or otherwise punish any member of a [PPT] who discusses or makes recommendations concerning the provision of special education and related services for a child during a [PPT] meeting for such child.”

Section 3, also effective July 1, 2019, requires that the Section 504 plan for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing must include a language and communication plan. Language and communications plans for

students with Individualized Education Programs who are deaf or hard of hearing have been required since 2012. In addition, Section 3 of the Act requires that the language and communication plan for a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan must address an *emergency communication plan* that includes procedures for alerting the child of an emergency situation and ensuring that the child's specific needs are met during the emergency situation.

Section 4 requires the DESPP, in consultation with SDE, to revise the school security and safety plan standards to include provisions relating to emergency communication plans by October 1, 2019. In addition, by January 1, 2020, districts must revise their school security and safety plans to include provisions relating to emergency communication plans.

Section 5 similarly requires the School Safety Infrastructure Council to include provisions relating to emergency communication plans in the criteria for school building projects by October 1, 2019.

Section 7, effective July 1, 2019, adds a requirement to electronically notify parents and guardians upon the identification of a student as gifted and talented. The notice must include (1) an explanation of how such student was identified as gifted and talented, and (2) the contact information for (A) the employee at the school responsible for gifted and talented students, or, if there is no such employee, the special education director; (B) the employee at SDE designated as responsible for providing such information; and (C) any associations in the state that provide support to gifted and talented students.

Section 8, effective July 1, 2019, explicitly provides that a local educational agency ("LEA") in which a student resides must pay the costs of services for students with Section 504 plans who attend interdistrict magnet

schools in the same manner as LEAs pay for special education, except such costs are not eligible for excess cost grants. Mirroring the special education provisions, the Act further indicates that magnet schools are responsible for ensuring full-time students with Section 504 plans receive the services in their Section 504 plans.

Section 10, effective July 1, 2019, provides that any private provider of special education services that has entered into a contract with an LEA must inform the LEA of: (1) all complaints received against such private provider concerning the mistreatment of students receiving special education services from the provider; (2) the resolution or outcome of such complaints and any corrective action taken as a result of such complaints; and (3) any programming or service changes for students under the jurisdiction of the LEA as a result of a complaint.

Lastly, the Act creates two working groups and requires one study. The first working group is charged with studying issues related to the provision of special education during the period after birth-to-three and before kindergarten. The second working group, established within SDE, will develop language assessments for students identified as deaf, hard of hearing, or both blind or visually impaired and deaf. Third, the IEP Advisory Council will conduct a study concerning the authorization of private therapists to provide special education and related services directly to students at school during the regular school day.

Guidelines for a Comprehensive School Counselor Program

Public Act 19-63 requires the State Board, in collaboration with a statewide association that represents school counselors, to adopt guidelines for a comprehensive school counseling program by July 1, 2020. The guidelines are intended to ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive school

counseling program that provides academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary and career readiness programming by a certified school counselor with adequate training. The State Board will publish the guidelines on SDE's website.

Domestic Violence Services and Resources

Public Act 19-146 requires the Judicial Branch's Office of Victim Services to compile information on domestic violence victim services and resources by December 1, 2019 and to provide that information to SDE. SDE, in turn, is then required to publish the information on its website by January 1, 2020 and to publish any necessary revisions to the information. Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, and each school year thereafter, SDE must disseminate this information to local and regional boards of education on an annual basis. Correspondingly, boards of education will be required to provide such information to (1) any student or parent or guardian of a student who expresses to a school employee that such student, parent or guardian or a person residing with such student or parent or guardian does not feel safe at home due to domestic violence, and to (2) a parent or guardian of a student who authorizes the transfer of such student's educational records to another school.

Paid Family and Medical Leave

Public Act 19-25 creates the Family and Medical Leave Insurance ("FMLI") program to provide wage replacement benefits to certain employees taking leave for reasons allowed under the state's Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"), which the Act also amends, or the family violence leave law. It will provide employees with up to twelve weeks of FMLI benefits over a twelve-month period. Also available will be two additional weeks of benefits for a serious

health condition that results in incapacitation during pregnancy.

With respect to public schools, the Act excludes a local or regional board of education from the definition of "employer." However, certain "covered public employees" will be eligible for these benefits. "Covered public employee" includes a member of a collective bargaining unit whose union negotiates into the FMLI program under the Municipal Employee Relations Act and the Teacher Negotiation Act. If a board of education negotiates inclusion in the FMLI program for members of a collective bargaining unit, "covered public employee" also means an individual who is employed by such board of education and who is not in a bargaining unit.

Under the Act, benefit-eligible employees will be those "covered public employees," who earned at least \$2,325 during their highest earning quarter within their base period (the first four of the five most recently completed quarters). In addition, the employees must have worked for their employer in the previous 12 weeks.

The program is funded by employee contributions, with collections beginning in January 2021. The Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority, which the Act creates, must annually determine the employee contribution rate, which cannot exceed 0.5%. The Act also caps the amount of an employee's earnings subject to contributions at the same amount of earnings subject to Social Security taxes (currently \$132,900). A covered employee's weekly benefits under the program are generally calculated as 95% of his or her average weekly wage, up to 40 times the state minimum wage, plus 60% of his or her average weekly wage that exceeds 40 times the minimum wage, with total benefits capped at 60 times the minimum wage.

Alternatively, employers can provide benefits through a private plan, which must provide their employees with at least the same level of benefits under the same conditions and employee costs as the FMLI program. Private plans must meet certain requirements for approval, and employees covered by an employer's private plan do not have to contribute to the FMLI program.

Duration of DCF Investigations

Section 2 of **Public Act 19-120**, effective July 1, 2019, modifies the deadlines for DCF child abuse and neglect investigations from forty-five calendar days to thirty-three business days.

Instruction in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Public Act 19-100, effective July 1, 2019, expands the required professional development training required by Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-148a and in-service training required by Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220a to include culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.

MISCELLANEOUS STATUTORY CHANGES AFFECTING SCHOOLS:

Minimum Budget Requirement

Section 271 of **Public Act 19-117**, effective July 1, 2019, extends the requirements of the Minimum Budget Requirement ("MBR") to the fiscal years ending June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021. This section of the Act also revises the existing MBR rule which allows towns to reduce their educational appropriations below the level necessary for MBR compliance

when the school district experiences a decline in its resident student population. Now, a town may reduce its budgeted appropriation for education if the school district experienced a decline in its resident student population in any of the prior five fiscal years, provided that the town can only use each year-to-year decline as the basis for a reduction in its educational appropriations once. Such reductions in appropriations based on declining student enrollment are also no longer subject to a statutory cap. The reauthorized MBR statute maintains each of the other existing categories of allowances for reductions in educational appropriations, but it adds clarifying examples of the types of cost savings measures that will be considered for approval by the Commissioner of Education.

Section 288 of Public Act 19-117, effective July 1, 2019, alters the penalty for MBR violations during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. Section 10-262i of the Connecticut General Statutes requires towns who violate the MBR to forfeit two dollars for every dollar of their funding shortfall. The statute requires the forfeiture of such amount by the town during the second year after the violation. This section of Public Act 19-117 halves the penalty for violations which occurred during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. It also allows for towns who committed violations during the fiscal year which ended June 30, 2019 to avoid a penalty altogether by appropriating additional funding to the board of education in the amount of the shortfall during the current fiscal year.

Finally, Section 250 of Public Act 19-117, effective July 1, 2019, requires SDE to compile an MBR calculation worksheet for each board of education. SDE must provide the worksheet the appropriate board of education and make it available on SDE's website.

Nonlapsing Accounts for Unexpended Funds

Section 285 of **Public Act 19-117**, effective July 1, 2019, increases the permissible amount of unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year's budgeted appropriation for education that a town may deposit into a nonlapsing account from one percent (1%) to two percent (2%) of the total budgeted appropriation for education for that prior fiscal year. The Act now clarifies that expenditures from such accounts may only be made for educational purposes and must be authorized by the local board of education of the town.

Quarterly Reports on Expenditures and Revenues

Effective July 1, 2019, Section 290 of **Public Act 19-117** establishes a new requirement that local and regional boards of education must, on a quarterly basis, post the board's current and projected expenditures and revenues on its website and submit a copy of such information to the legislative body of the municipality (or board of selectmen). This requirement is effective for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Municipal and Regional School District Audits

Each municipality and regional school district must have its financial statements audited at least once every year by an independent auditor. The statutes expressly authorize the Office of Policy and Management ("OPM") to review those audit reports on a biennial basis and to report any evidence of fraud or embezzlement to the State's Attorney's Office. OPM is also required to prepare a report and submit it to the municipality or regional school district whenever review

of the audit results in (1) findings of unsound or irregular financial practice or (2) if the audit was not conducted in compliance with statutory requirements. The report must include detailed findings and recommendations for corrective action. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 1 of **Public Act 19-193** will now require that upon receipt of such a report by the chief executive officer of a municipality or the superintendent of schools for the regional school district, such individual shall attest to and explain the secretary's findings and submit a written plan for corrective action to OPM.

MARB Review of Collective Bargaining Agreements

Current law expressly authorizes the Municipal Accountability Review Board ("MARB") to have the same opportunity and authority to approve or reject municipal or board of education collective bargaining agreements for designated tier III municipalities as are provided to the legislative body of the municipality. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 5 of **Public Act 19-193** clarifies that this opportunity and authority for MARB to review agreements reached by boards of education in tier III municipalities referred to MARB on or after January 1, 2018 includes agreements with non-certified bargaining units that do not otherwise require municipal approval. The board of education must submit such negotiated agreements to MARB within fourteen days of reaching an agreement and MARB will have thirty days to act upon the agreement.

Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Public Act 19-74 contains a number of provisions aimed at increasing minority teacher recruitment and retention. Section 1 of Public Act 19-74 requires that for the 2020-2021 school year, and each year thereafter, the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy

Oversight Council must develop and implement strategies and use existing resources to ensure at least 250 new minority teachers and administrators, of which at least 30% are men, are hired by boards of education each year.

Changes effective July 1, 2019 include the following:

Section 2 requires the Commissioner of Education to establish educator certification reciprocity agreements with education officials for each state. If the commissioner is unable to establish a reciprocity agreement, the commissioner may establish or join an interstate agreement.

Section 3 permits a satisfactory, rather than an excellent, score to be substituted for a subject area assessment for certification requirements for a subject shortage area.

Section 4 extends the teacher mortgage assistance program to certified teachers who graduated from public high school in an educational reform district, an historically black college or university, or a Hispanic-serving institution.

Section 5 creates an additional category under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-183v(b) for the reemployment of retired teachers receiving retirement benefits for up to one full school year for such retired teachers who graduated from the above-listed schools.

Section 6 revises certain teacher certification requirements such that the State Board shall issue an initial educator certificate to any person who holds a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited or has received an equivalent accreditation. Section 7 removes the requirement to complete subject matter assessments after the expiration of a valid teaching certificate in certain instances. In particular,

subject matter assessments are not required if the person either (A) successfully completed at least three years of teaching experience under a valid teaching certificate in the past ten years in such endorsement area, or (B) holds a master's degree or higher in the subject area for which such person is seeking renewal or advancement. Similarly, any person who has previously achieved a satisfactory evaluation on an approved subject area assessment for a teaching certificate that has expired will not be required to take the current subject matter assessment, provided the Commissioner of Education determines the requirements are at least equivalent.

In addition, Section 262 of **Public Act 19-117**, effective July 1, 2019, creates a minority educator loan reimbursement grant for the 2019-2020 fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, and for each fiscal year thereafter, through the Office of Higher Education. This grant is available to minority educators who hold a professional certification and are employed as certified staff by a board of education. As clarified by, Section 263 of Public Act 19-117, this loan reimbursement grant will be a part of the larger minority teacher incentive program established under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-168a and replaces a previous loan reimbursement program.

Pilot Program for Advanced Manufacturing Certificate

Public Act 19-103 requires that the Board of Regents for Higher Education ("BOR") create a pilot program by January 1, 2020 that establishes an advanced manufacturing certificate program in one public high school in Connecticut per year. The Act further requires the BOR to (1) develop an application process and selection criteria for interested local and regional boards of education and (2) explore funding for the program. The criteria developed must give priority to (a)

areas of the state where there is a need for a workforce trained in advanced manufacturing, (b) economically distressed municipalities, (c) areas where residents do not have access to such programs within close proximity to their homes and (d) areas of the state where there is sufficient space in a public high school to operate such programs. Provided that the local or regional board of education selected to participate in the pilot program agrees, the Act additionally permits the BOR to collaborate with independent institutions of higher education that offer a manufacturing certificate program to operate the program at the local public high school.

Local and regional boards of education may apply to participate separately or jointly with other boards of education in their surrounding areas. Those wishing to participate in the pilot program will need to apply in a manner and form prescribed by the BOR and, if selected, will be required to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the BOR with concerning details of the program.

Beginning in the fall semester of 2020, each advanced manufacturing certificate program must enroll:

- (1) public high school students in grades eleven and twelve with the goal of simultaneously earning high school and college credits and an advanced manufacturing certificate while enrolled in high school, and
- (2) adults (upon approval by the local or regional board of education) to take classes at the high school location during evening and weekend hours with the goal of earning an advanced manufacturing certificate.

The BOR must evaluate the operation and effectiveness of the pilot program and provide a report and recommendations to the General Assembly by January 1, 2021.

Task Force to Analyze Laws Governing Dyslexia Instruction and Training

Over the past several years, the legislature has passed various statutes concerning dyslexia training and instruction. For example, in 2015, Public Act 15-97 added the detection and recognition of dyslexia and evidence-based structured literacy interventions to the list of required topics addressed in required in-service training programs for certified staff. In 2016, Public Act 16-92 provided that any person seeking a remedial reading, remedial language arts or reading consultant endorsement must have completed a program of study in the diagnosis and remediation of reading that includes instruction and practicum hours in the detection of, and interventions for, students with dyslexia. In 2017, Public Act 17-3 added candidates for a comprehensive special education or integrated early childhood and special education endorsement to the list of those required to complete such a program of study.

This year, **Special Act 19-8** establishes a task force to analyze and make recommendations on issues relating to the implementation of laws governing dyslexia instruction and training. Part of the analysis for the task force will include whether current in-service training and professional development models are appropriate to provide teachers with the knowledge and understanding to meet the needs of dyslexic students. Additionally, the task force may make recommendations on the components needed to assist and identify students at risk for dyslexia and whether reporting screening data for all school districts would be beneficial. By January 1, 2021, the task force will submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees within the General Assembly.

Study Regarding Regional Cooperation

Section 6 of **Public Act 19-91**, effective from passage, requires SDE to conduct a study concerning the authorization of towns and cooperative arrangements under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-158a to be considered a local education agency for purposes of regional cooperation, maximization of efficiencies and cost-savings, without establishing a regional school district. The study is due by January 1, 2020.

Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework

Section 7 of **Public Act 19-91**, effective from passage, calls for SDE to update, by January 1, 2020, the comprehensive school health education component of the Health and Balanced Curriculum Framework to include sexual harassment and assault, adolescent relationship abuse and intimate partner violence, human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

School Governance Council Member Terms Limits

Public Act 19-91, July 1, 2019, revises Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-223j to provide that members of a school governance council may serve up to four two-year terms, rather than the previous limit of two terms.

After School Program Grants

Local and regional boards of education may biennially apply to SDE for an “after school program grant” to support after school educational, enrichment and recreational programs for students in grades K-12. Section 248 of **Public Act 19-117** establishes a new requirement, effective for the 2019-2020 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, that SDE award a minimum of 10% of the appropriated funds to municipalities

or local or regional boards of education with a total population of 7,500 or fewer. The Act, however, further provides that any funds not awarded to those municipalities or boards of education by October 15th of each fiscal year may be awarded to any municipality or local or regional board of education. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, grant recipients may expend funds for transportation purposes as part of the after school program.

Uniform Chart of Accounts

Current law requires school districts to annually report school revenues and expenditures to OPM and SDE. Such reports must be filed in accordance with the Uniform Chart of Accounts (“UCOA”) developed by SDE and the Accounting Manual for Municipalities developed by OPM. Effective July 1, 2019, **Public Act 19-117** requires that the UCOA include amounts of federal impact aid received by the school district.

Youth Bureau Grant Program

SDE had been responsible for administering the youth service bureau grant and the enhancement grant programs. Effective July 1, 2019, Sections 251-256 of **Public Act 19-117** transfer that responsibility to DCF.

Technical Education and Career System

Sections 273-284 of **Public Act 19-117** delay by two years the implementation of legislation regarding the transition of the Technical Education and Career System to an independent agency.

School Building Projects

July Special Session Public Act 19-1 makes several revisions to statutes specifically related to school

construction grant projects. One notable change, effective immediately, is a new requirement that a school building committee established by a town or regional school district for a school building project must include at least one member who has experience in the construction industry. The Act also extends the authority of the state to authorize emergency approval of construction grants to projects related to school security projects. The Act further makes adjustments to the reimbursement rates currently available to diversity schools and provides diversity schools an opportunity to obtain an additional 10% reimbursement. Lastly, the Act makes several revisions to certain contracting requirements for architectural, construction management and consultant services related to construction projects that are effective July 1, 2020.

Teachers Retirement System Contributions

Public Act 19-73, effective October 1, 2019, revises the definition of “contributions” in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-183b, the teachers’ retirement system statute. Beginning January 1, 2020, mandatory contributions will continue to consist of 7% regular contributions and 1.25% health contributions, except that no health contributions will be required for an employee of

the state that (A) has completed the vesting service necessary to receive health benefits provided to retired state employees, and (B) does not participate in any group health insurance plans maintained for retired teachers. The bill does not affect any other obligations of state employees to contribute to the state’s retiree health care trust fund.

Additional Registration for Carriers Transporting Students

Section 7 of **Public Act 19-119** provides that, as of October 1, 2019, each carrier engaged in the transportation of students must register with the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles in a manner determined by the commissioner. Registration must include the carrier’s name, address, and the name of the employee or agent assigned to review the semimonthly DMV reports concerning the status of the licenses and endorsements of the carrier’s drivers. A carrier must file amendments to the registration report regarding any material change in information within thirty calendar days after the carrier knows or reasonably should know of the change. Failure to comply with this new registration requirement subjects the carrier to civil penalties ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500.

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POLICY SERVICES

POLICY UPDATE SUMMARY

PAGE 1

UPDATE #4

JULY 31, 2019

The following chart has been developed and summarized for your convenience. Please note that this does not represent all of what is required in your policy manual, and although some sections in this update may not require policy language, they may be procedural and/or recommended.

Update Section	Public Act #	Subject	Policy Number(s) Impacted	Policy Topic	Is Policy Language Required?
A.	P.A. 19-117	An Act Concerning The State Budget...and Implementing Provisions of the Budget	3410	System of Accounts	No. A revised optional policy is provided.
			3171.1	Non-Lapsing Education Fund	No. A revised optional policy is provided.
			3430	Periodic Financial Reports	No. A revised optional policy is provided.
			3432/3433	Budget & Expense Report/Annual Financial Statement	No. A revised optional policy is provided.
B.	P.A. 19-5	An Act Concerning The Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home and Firearm Safety Programs in Public Schools	5142	Student Safety	No. A revised recommended policy is provided.
C.	P.A. 19-12	An Act Concerning The Inclusion of Black and Latino Studies in the Public School Curriculum	6142	Basic Instructional Program	No. A revised recommended policy is provided.
D.	P.A. 19-13	An Act Prohibiting The Sale of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products to Persons Under Age Twenty-one	1331	Smoke Free Environment	No. A revised optional policy is provided.
E.	P.A. 19-128	An Act Concerning The Inclusion of Computer Science Instruction in the Public School Curriculum	6142	Basic Instructional Program	No. A revised recommended policy is provided.
F.	P.A. 19-49	An Act Concerning Transitional Services for Children	6159	Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program	Yes. A revised mandated policy is provided.
G.	P.A. 19-60	An Act Allowing Students to Apply Sunscreen Prior to Engaging in Outdoor Activities	5141.214	Student Sunscreen Use	No. A new optional policy is provided.
H.	P.A. 19-166	An Act Concerning School Climates	5131.911	Bullying	No. A revised recommended policy is provided.



POLICY UPDATE SUMMARY

The following chart has been developed and summarized for your convenience. Please note that this does not represent all of what is required in your policy manual, and although some sections in this update may not require policy language, they may be procedural and/or recommended.

Update Section	Public Act #	Subject	Policy Number(s) Impacted	Policy Topic	Is Policy Language Required?
I.	P.A. 19-173	An Act Concerning The Improvement of Child Development Through Play	5144.4	Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students	Yes. A revised mandated policy is provided.
J.	P.A. 19-195	An Act Concerning The Establishment of a Firm Graduation Date and the Date When a School District May Commence School Sessions	6111	School Calendar	No. A revised recommended policy is provided.
K.	P.A. 19-100	An Act Concerning The Inclusion of Instruction in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and In-Service Training	4131	Staff Development	No. A revised recommended policy and administrative regulation are provided.
L.	P.A. 19-184	An Act Concerning The Provision of Special Education	6159	Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program	Yes. A revised mandated policy is provided. (See Update Section F)
			6172.1	Gifted and Talented Students Program	No. A revised optional policy is provided.
M.	P.A. 19-91	An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes	1110.3	School Governance Councils	No. A revised recommended policy is provided. (Excerpt Provided)
			4112.5/ 4212.5	Security Check/ Fingerprinting	No. A revised recommended policy is provided.
			4112.51/ 4212.51	Employment/Reference Checks	No. A revised recommended policy is provided.
			4122	Student Teachers	No. A revised optional policy is provided.
			5114 5131 5144	Suspension & Expulsion Conduct & Discipline Discipline	Yes. District mandated to have a discipline policy. Any one of these would suffice. (Excerpts provided)

A mandated policy to consider.

Students

Discipline

Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes that a positive approach toward exercise and physical activity is important to the health and well-being of students. The Board requires that each student in elementary school shall have not less than twenty minutes daily in total devoted to physical exercise, except that a Planning and Placement Team may alter such schedule for a child requiring special education and related services. Further, the Board permits, in its elementary schools, including an additional amount of time, beyond the required twenty minutes for physical exercise, devoted to undirected play during the regular school day, subject to the approval of the building administration.

All aspects of the school experience should encourage students to have a healthy attitude toward exercise and promote the life-long enjoyment of physical activity. Therefore, when school employees impose disciplinary consequences for student misconduct during the regular day, the following restrictions shall apply:

1. Loss of Recess as Disciplinary Consequence

Except as provided below, school employees may NOT prevent a student in elementary school from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise or undirected play in the regular school day ~~recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning~~ as a form of discipline. Recess and other physically active learning opportunities may include movement-oriented learning activities in the academic environment, physical activity breaks, and regularly scheduled school wide routines and events that engage students in physical activity that is the time devoted each day (at least 20 minutes) to physical exercise in the District's elementary schools.

Loss of recess or other physically active learning opportunities as a form of discipline may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if approved in writing by the building administration prior to the imposition of the discipline. Such approval may be granted for safety reasons, as a last resort before in-school suspension, or in extraordinary situations when alternative strategies to address student misconduct have been ineffective.

This restriction shall not apply to students who are receiving in-school suspension.

2. Physical Activity as Punishment

School employees may NOT require students enrolled in grades K-12, inclusive, to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day.

Students

Discipline

Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students (continued)

3. Wellness Instruction

School employees shall not prevent students from participating in physical exercise or undirected play during wellness instruction as a form of discipline.

This restriction does not apply to brief periods of respite/time-outs, referrals to the building administrator, or for safety reasons.

At no time shall an entire class be prevented from participating in wellness instruction or physical exercise activity as a disciplinary consequence.

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to develop guidelines to implement this policy.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent a school employee from acting in accordance with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed by the student's Planning and Placement Team (PPT).

For the purpose of this policy, "school employee" means a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by the Board or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to, or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the Board.

Any employee who fails to comply with this policy may will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Any contracted individual who provides services to or on behalf of District students and who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy may be subject to having his/her contract for services suspended by the District.

(cf. 6142.10 – Health Education Program)

(cf. 6142.101 – Wellness)

(cf. 6142.61 – Physical Activity)

(cf. 6142.6 – Physical Education)

Students

Discipline

Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students (continued)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221o Lunch periods. Recess (as amended by P.A. 12-116, An Act Concerning Educational Reform, ~~and~~ P.A. 13-173, An Act Concerning Childhood Obesity and Physical Exercise in Schools and P.A. 19-173 An Act Concerning the Improvement of Child Development Through Play)

10-221u Boards to adopt policies addressing the use of physical activity as discipline. (as amended by PA 18-15)

Policy adopted:

cps 3/14
rev 1/17
rev 7/18
rev 6/19

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education Handbook

Approved June 26, 2012

Revised – May 7, 2015 **DRAFT**



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 principals of the Board.

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Disclaimer Statement

This Board of Education Handbook contains general information drawn from **a variety of public** the following source documents, **including**: the Town of Fairfield Charter, Board of Education By-laws, Board of Education Policies, Administrative Regulations and Fairfield Public Schools' 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 B. Mooney, 7th 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 **the** 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 Board of Education Policy, Administrative Regulation, or practice. This Handbook does not create any new or additional obligation or requirement on the Board of Education, administration, or Fairfield Public School District and is to be used solely for information purposes.

I. ~~Introduction~~ ~~Introductory Letter~~



May 7, 2015

To: ~~The Citizens of the Town of Fairfield~~

The Board of Education is committed to governing the Fairfield Public Schools in a professional and responsible manner. This means providing leadership to students, staff, and the larger community, effectively communicating to the public, and having a common understanding of Board By-Laws, policies, practices, and procedures. ~~Our~~ ~~The Board's~~ hope is to ~~serve as a model of~~ foster democratic debate, in which issues are raised and ~~debated~~ discussed in a passionate but collegial atmosphere and decided in a responsible manner.

This handbook is intended to serve as a guide for citizens, Board members, and prospective Board candidates in the operations of the Board of Education. It is intended only to summarize, and bring together in a single location, certain information, policies, and practices helpful in understanding the organizing principles of the Board of Education.

~~The mission of the Fairfield Public Schools, as approved by the Board of Education in March 2014, is as follows:~~

~~"The mission of the Fairfield Public Schools, in partnership with families and community, is to ensure that every student acquires the knowledge and skills needed to be a lifelong learner, responsible citizen, and successful participant in an ever-changing global society through a comprehensive educational program."~~

~~We~~ The Board encourages parents, students, and the general public to become involved in the Fairfield Public Schools. As a community, we can achieve great success for all students in our district.

Sincerely,

Philip Dwyer
Chairman, Board of Education

David G. Title
Superintendent of Schools

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.~~ **Fairfield Public Schools will ensure that every student is engaged in a rigorous learning experience that recognizes and values the individual and challenges each student to achieve academic progress including expressive, personal, physical, civic, and social development. Students will be respectful, ethical, and responsible citizens with an appreciation and understanding of global issues. Student achievement and performance shall rank among the best in the state and the nation (Policy 0110, ~~Approved 8/27/04 and Revised and Approved 3/11/14).~~**

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 every changing global society by providing, in partnership with families and community, a comprehensive, rigorous educational program.~~ **in partnership with families and community, is to ensure that every student acquires the knowledge and skills needed to be a lifelong learner, responsible citizen, and successful participant in an ever changing global society through a comprehensive educational program. (Policy 0100, ~~Approved 8/27/2004 Revised and Approved 9/23/2008 Revised and Approved 3/11/2014)~~**

A. ~~Beliefs~~—(Policy 0100, ~~Revised and Approved 9/23/08)~~

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

B. ~~Student Goals~~ EDUCATIONAL 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: 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. Fairfield Public School students will

- ~~D~~develop into responsible citizens who exhibit ethical behavior;
- ~~A~~cknowledge, explore, and value the importance of diversity;
- ~~D~~develop a healthy personal identity and self-reliance;
- ~~D~~emonstrate strong motivational persistence to learn;
- ~~E~~xhibit an inquisitive attitude, open-mind, and curiosity;
- ~~U~~nderstand international issues and demonstrate the skills needed to participate in a global society; and
- ~~A~~cquire knowledge of the following areas of study: science; technology; mathematics; language arts; social studies; literary, visual, and performing arts; world language; unified arts; and health and physical education.

ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

In order to achieve the above Educational Goals, Fairfield Public School students shall acquire knowledge and mastery of skills by:

- ~~E~~ngaging in critical thinking through
 - ~~C~~ollaboration
 - ~~P~~roblem solving
 - ~~A~~nalyzing data and complex systems
 - ~~A~~cquiring, evaluating, and applying information to build greater understanding
 - ~~T~~ransforming existing ideas, knowledge, and solutions into new ideas, products, and processes
 - ~~I~~nnovative, creative, and artistic expression;
- ~~C~~ommunicating effectively by
 - ~~A~~sking questions, listening, and thinking adaptively while making connections and creating innovative solutions
 - ~~C~~onducting research and demonstrating the skills necessary to locate and use information effectively
 - ~~E~~xpressing ideas clearly and effectively;
- ~~A~~chieving an understanding of themselves and others by
 - ~~U~~tilizing effective study skills and articulating their own learning style
 - ~~S~~elf-advocacy
 - ~~T~~aking advantage of opportunities to explore, develop, and express their own uniqueness and creativity
 - ~~R~~ecognizing the importance of healthy social, emotional, and physical growth
 - ~~E~~xhibiting ethical conduct
 - ~~D~~emonstrating empathy for others;
- ~~M~~astering literacy and numeracy;
- ~~G~~aining understanding of the interactions among various areas of study;

- Recognizing one's individual civic responsibility by
 - Developing an understanding of local, state, national, and international governments
 - Exhibiting civic mindedness through participation in local, state, national, and international communities.

(Policy 0200, Approved ~~8/27/04~~; ~~Revised and Approved 3/11/14~~ Revised and Approved 10/9/18)

III. Board of Education Meetings

A. Master Calendar – The Board of Education shall hold at least ten regular scheduled meetings a year and shall give annual notice of such meetings- (Town of Fairfield Charter, Article VIII, Section 8.1, B.1). ~~Currently, †The Board of Education has~~ **recently opted to** holds ~~fourteen~~**sixteen R**regular Meetings a year, and the agenda for each meeting, as described in the Board of Education By-laws Article V, Section 4A, is established between the Superintendent and the Board Chair **in consultation with the Vice Chair and Secretary**. ~~While~~ Individual action items on a variety of topics can be scheduled for any meeting-. ~~Currently the work of the Board of Education follows a familiar~~**the** pattern as described below (subject to change):

1. January – Two regular meetings and two budget review meetings are scheduled. ~~and~~ **A** proposed budget is adopted at the last regular meeting in January to meet the Town of Fairfield Charter requirement of submitting a budget request by January 31st.
2. February – One regular meeting is scheduled, which allows for attendance by Board of Education members at various budget review sessions conducted by the Board of Selectmen (**BOS**), Board of Finance (**BOF**), and **Representative Town Meeting (RTM)**.
3. March – One regular meeting is scheduled, which allows for attendance by Board of Education members at various budget review sessions conducted by the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and RTM.
4. April – One regular meeting is scheduled. The Board, **pursuant to State statute**, 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 M**meeting.
5. May – Two regular meetings are scheduled, 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,~~ **S**tudent awards are **also** presented in May.
6. June – Two regular meetings are scheduled. Budget transfers, if necessary for the current fiscal year, are ~~done~~ **approved**. The school lunch program, lunch prices, ~~lunch program employee wage increases,~~ **as well as** and participation in the Healthy Food Certification program are reviewed and approved. ~~The Board of Education reflects on improvements to the budget presentation documents. An evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools is conducted, and an extension of his/her contract is acted upon.~~
7. July – No regular meetings are scheduled.
8. August – One regular meeting is scheduled on the 4th **last** Tuesday of the month. The Board holds a discussion on the initiatives of the Fairfield Public Schools for the ~~next~~**coming** year. It also holds a general discussion regarding **the** next year's capital and operating budgets. The Board of Education discusses its own goals, including how best to present the needs of students ~~to insure the proposed Board of Education budget is approved by~~ **and the district to** other Town bodies.
9. September – Two regular meetings are scheduled. The Board ~~gets~~ **receives** a presentation on the capital improvements budget. The Board of Education approves its own goals.

10. October – ~~One~~ **Two** regular meetings ~~are~~ is scheduled. The Board approves the proposed capital improvements budget. The school calendar for the following year is ~~adopted~~ **proposed**.
11. November – One regular meeting is scheduled ~~with the primary purpose to hold~~ **which includes** the annual organizational meeting at which officers are elected and the By-laws are reviewed and other organizational matters which may come before the Board of Education.
12. December – One regular meeting is scheduled. The Board of Education meeting calendar for the following year is issued at this meeting. **Possible B**y-law changes proposed in November are ~~adopted~~ **voted upon; others are discussed**. The proposed budget calendar for the Board of Education, Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and the RTM is reviewed.
13. **Town Halls—held bi-annually, for citizen commentary on facilities, finances, and programs of FPS.**

B. Meetings – The **CT** 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 Board of Education can cancel **R**regular **M**meetings when there is no business that cannot wait until the next **R**regular **M**meeting. The Board of Education can also schedule **S**special **M**meetings if matters arise requiring action that cannot wait until the next **R**regular **M**meeting. There are three types of meetings under the FOIA ~~as follows:~~ (**A**s outlined in *A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law*, by Thomas B. Mooney, 7th edition, pages 44-64):

1. **Regular Meeting** – **a meeting** which has been included in the listing of **R**regular **M**meeting ~~which has been~~ filed by January 31st of each year. By Fairfield Board of Education practice, the list of scheduled **R**regular **M**meeting ~~for the subsequent coming year~~ is published at the December **R**regular **M**meeting and submitted to the Town Clerk.
2. **Special Meeting** – **a 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 **R**regular **M**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~~ **a meeting** similar to a **S**special **M**meeting but **which** 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.

C. 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.

- D. Agenda** – The agenda is established in discussions between the Superintendent of Schools and the Chair of the Board of Education, **and in consultation with the Vice-Chair and Secretary**. Individual Board of Education 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 3A). 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 **Rregular Mmeeting** upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board present and voting- (By-laws Article V, Section 3E).
- E. Minutes** – Minutes are maintained in accordance with State law and the Town of Fairfield Charter. All meetings are recorded, and the audio/videotape and all records are retained in accordance with the **Sstate Sstatutes** 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 Board of Education. After a draft set of minutes is finalized, **they are it is** included in the Board agenda for review and approval by the full Board- (Board Practice).
- F. 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 V, Section 7). Board of Education members ~~will do their homework by~~ **shall** reading and studying the agenda and all backup information in advance **of the upcoming meeting** (CABE Boardsmanship – *Twenty Guidelines for Board Members #16*).
- G. Public Comment on Agenda Items** – The Board of Education ~~will accept public comment as described in this section and the by-laws of the Board. on all items placed on the agenda for discussion and action at the time the item appears on the agenda.~~ **eagerly welcomes members of the public to attend Board of Education meetings and to become informed on issues concerning which the Board must act.** Public comment is not generally taken on the minutes, election of officers, Board of Education By-laws, ~~presentations~~ and personnel matters. ~~Public comment will follow discussion of the item by the Board of Education and prior to any vote. The standard practice has been to allow each speaker two minutes on a specific business item.~~ **Public Comment is described in the BoE By-laws as follows:**

As a means of encouraging public participation during Board meetings, the Chairman shall solicit comments from the public with regard to agenda items, as proposed or amended, that the Board will be discussing and/or will be acting upon by vote...Up to three (3) minutes may be allotted to each speaker. The Chair may modify this limitation at the beginning of a meeting if the number of persons wishing to speak makes it advisable to do so.~~Public comment on non-voting items can be taken either at the beginning of each meeting or following the discussion of the non-voting item. A member of the public can only speak to a topic once at a meeting. Public comment on voting items will take place at the time the item is on the meeting agenda, following Board discussion and prior to when the vote is taken. Public Comment on agenda items will take place at the beginning and end of the meeting. Public Comment on Old Business will also take place following Board discussion of those items and prior to when any vote is taken.~~

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- (By-laws Article V, Section 6, paragraph A, number 2 shown in italics. Balance is past practice).

- H. ~~Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items~~**— The Board of Education 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 Chair. The Board will not hear comment on individual personnel matters or comments addressed to specific member(s) of the Board. Decorum will be maintained. (By-laws Article V, Section 6B)
- I. 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).
- J. Robert's Rules of Order** – The Board of Education ~~has adopted~~ shall conduct its business in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Perseus Publishing, to encourage full, fair, and orderly discussion; to maintain order; and 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 V, Section 9 and Robert's Rules of Order defined).
- K. Open Board Comment During Meetings** – The Open Board comment period should not be used to surprise the Board or the Superintendent. ~~Board of Education 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.~~ Members should not use this agenda item as a time to commence a discussion which has not been noted to the public (CABE Boardmanship – *Twenty Guidelines for Board Members #1* and Chair's email Fall, 2011).
- L. Executive Session** – The public has a right to be at Board of Education meetings and to know when, where, and why the Board is meeting. Thus, all Board of Education 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 two-thirds (2/3) vote is required to go into Executive Session. The Board of Education shall state, on the record, for which of the approved reasons it is going into Executive Session:
1. Discussion of personnel appointments, evaluation, and dismissal (employee must be notified, can be present, and/or can require meeting to be in public session)-
 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 the FOIA can be found in *A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law* by Thomas B. Mooney, 7th edition, pages 55-64.)

M. Prohibition on Discussion Involving Group Emails—As members of a public board, Board of Education members must abide by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which mandates that discussions regarding the business and policy of the school district should take place in public view. It is the policy of this Board that email shall not be used in such a manner as to deprive the public of these open-meeting rights. Therefore, group emails involving multiple Board members regarding issues before the Board, **or which may reasonably be expected to come before the Board** are not permitted. Individual Board members may consult with one another on issues; however, they should be cognizant of the restrictions imposed by the FOIA and abide by the spirit of open-meeting principles.

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 Board of Education 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 2015 five members will be up for election, and in 2017 four members will be up for election.**

~~**C. Committee of the Whole** – The Board of Education, at its November, 2011 Organizational 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 Chair shall appoint or re-appoint Board of Education 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 Organizational Meeting each November. (By-laws Article II, Section 3A, sub-sections 3-810).

E. Reports – ~~Liaison and Committee Reports should be~~ **If there is a Committee and Liaison written report, it should be** sent in advance for distribution in the Friday

Packet. Where additional oral reports are needed, points should be ~~made in as few words as possible.~~ Meeting reports, if required, should be no longer than two ~~minutes.~~ **succinct** (CABE Boardsmanship – *Twenty Guidelines for Board Members #1* and Chair’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 4A, sub-sections 1-2).

G. Transportation Safety Advisors – The Transportation Safety Advisors ~~are~~ **comprise** a working group that makes recommendations relative to school transportation safety. The Transportation Safety Advisors are generally ~~comprised~~ **composed** of the Transportation Supervisor, a Board of Education member, a representative from the police department, and the bus contractor. The primary function of the Transportation Safety Advisors is to review, upon written referral, a transportation decision made by the Transportation Supervisor on a request made by a parent or citizen for a bus route or bus stop change. 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 of Fairfield Charter Positions

- a. Fairfield Board of Health – In accordance with the Town of Fairfield Charter Article X, Section 10.9, a Board of Education member is designated annually ~~to~~ and serves as a voting member of the Board of Health.
- b. Fairfield Parks and Recreation Commission – In accordance with the Town of Fairfield Charter Article X, Section 10.10, a Board of Education member is designated annually ~~to~~ and serves as a voting member of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

2. Board of Education By-laws

- a. Cooperative Educational 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 cost of such construction. In accordance with Board of Education By-laws and subject to any approvals required by the Town, the Board of Education Chair appoints a Board member to serve as a ~~voting member of~~ liaison to any school building committee. (By-laws Article II, Section 3A, sub-section ~~3~~5d). The Board of Education 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 Board of Education By-laws, the Board of Education has maintained a liaison relationship with the RTM, and the Board of Education Chair annually appoints a Board member to attend meetings for the purpose of developing a closer working relationship and to enhance communications.
- d. Board of Finance – In accordance with Board of Education By-laws, the Board of Education has maintained a liaison relationship with the Board of Finance, and the Board of Education Chair annually appoints a Board member to attend meetings for the purpose of developing a closer working relationship and to enhance communications.
- e. PTA Council – In accordance with Board of Education By-laws, the Board of Education has maintained a liaison relationship with the

PTA Council, and the Board of Education Chair annually appoints a Board 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 town committee was established to oversee selected projects, as may be assigned to them by the First Selectman. The Board of Education Chair appoints a Board member to serve as a voting member on this committee.
- ~~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. The Board of Education Chair appoints a Board member to serve on this committee, in addition to the Superintendent or designee.~~
- c. SEPTA – By past practice, the Board of Education has maintained a liaison relationship with the Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA), and the Board of Education Chair annually appoints a Board 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. **Board of Selectmen** – 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at Sullivan Independence Hall, 1st floor conference room at 4:30 p.m.
2. **The Board of Finance** – 1st Tuesday of the month at the Board of Education, 2nd floor conference room at 7:30 p.m.
3. **The Representative Town Meeting (“RTM”)** – 4th Monday of the month at the Board of Education, 2nd floor conference room at 8:00 p.m. RTM subcommittees meet as follows (subject to change by the RTM):
 - a. **Legislation and Administration** – 3rd Monday of the month at Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:00 p.m.
 - b. **Finance** – 3rd Monday of the month at Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:30 p.m.
 - c. **Public Works and Planning** – 3rd Monday of the month at Sullivan Independence Hall at 8:00 p.m.
 - d. **Education and Recreation** – 3rd Wednesday of the month at Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:00 p.m.
 - e. **Public Health and Safety** – 3rd Wednesday of the month at Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:30 p.m.
4. Citizens interested in attending meetings of any Town body should check the Town website at 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 admin@fairtvonline.org to determine how to watch archived Board of Education meetings. For more information, visit www.fairfieldct.org/fairtv/ondemand.

V. Standards of Conduct

N. ~~Discussion Among Members Outside of Meetings—~~
~~Board of Education members must debate the business and policy of the school district within public view. Thus, group emails regarding issues before the Board of Education or which may reasonably be considered to come before the Board of Education may not be discussed via email. Individual members of the Board of Education may consult with one another on issues, but group emails on such issues are not permitted. (By-laws Article V, Section 10).~~ **Prohibition on Discussion Involving Group Emails—**As members of a public board, Board of Education members must abide by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which mandates that discussions regarding the business and policy of the school district should take place in public view. It is the policy of this Board that email shall not be used in such a manner as to deprive the public of these open-meeting rights. Therefore, group emails involving multiple Board members regarding issues before the Board, or which may reasonably be expected to come before the Board are not permitted. Individual Board members may consult with one another on issues; however, they should be cognizant of the restrictions imposed by the FOIA and abide by the spirit of open-meeting principles.

A.

B. Public Comment by Board of Education Members – Board of Education members can speak to the media, but only the Chair can speak on behalf of the Board. Board of Education members should feel comfortable deferring comment to the Chair or to the Superintendent- (By-laws Article II, Section 3A, sub-section 23 and Policy 1100 Approved 8/27/04).

C. Town of Fairfield Charter – 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- (Town of Fairfield Charter Article XI, Section 11.1).

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

1. Conflicts of Interest – Article XI, Section 11.2
2. Disclosure of Interest – Article XI, Section 11.3
3. Fair and Equal Treatment – Article XI, Section 11.4
4. Penalties and Disciplinary Action for Violations – Article XI, Section 11.5

D. Fairfield Board of Education – Standards of Conduct – ~~Members of~~ The Board of Education have adopted additional standards of conduct through ~~their~~ its By-laws. Board of Education members must:

1. Adhere to the most recent edition of CAFE's Code of Ethics for Boards of Education (By-laws, Article III, Section 2)
2. Comply with the Conflicts of Interest Statements (By-laws Article III, Section 6)
3. Follow a Code of Ethics (By-laws Article VII, as further defined in Policy 0050, Approved 8/27/04).

VI. Annual Budget Process

A. Board of Education 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- (Policy 3100, Approved 8/27/04).

B. Timetable – To facilitate accomplishing this role, an annual operating and capital budget calendar is established to ensure the Board of Education 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 Board of Education Initiatives – Board members and Superintendents are staunch advocates of high quality, free public education for all Connecticut children- (Policy 0050, Approved 8/27/04).

D. Attendance and Support at Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, RTM Town Meetings – Board of Education members will ~~make every effort~~ **strive** to attend the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, RTM subcommittee, 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, Number 17, Amended and Approved 12/01/112/13/18). This By-law is further defined by Board of Education 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 130012, Approved 8/27/04). ~~The essence of these By-laws and policies is to not be a “ball water carrier” for others.~~ Parents and other citizens should present their own issues, problems, or proposals through the chain of command- (CABE Boardsmanship – Twenty Guidelines for Board Members #6).
- B. Group Board of Education Email Address, 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. Board of Education 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 Policy Practice).
- C. Employee Grievance and Discipline Hearings** – The Board will act in accordance with the grievance procedures outlined in the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement- (Policy 42604135.4/435.4, 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 Board of Education Executive Director of Human Resources Personal and Legal Services, and the Board of Education Attorney. The Negotiating Committees for the Teacher and Administrator contracts also includes 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 District~~ shall, prior to expelling any student, conduct a hearing to be governed by the procedures outlined in the Board of Education Policy Manual. The Superintendent is hereby authorized to retain a Hearing Officer to conduct the hearing- (Policy 51194, Revised and Approved 5/15/12).
- F. Student Residency Hearings** – Any child, parent, or guardian may request a hearing before a Hearing Officer, as appointed by the ~~Board of Education District~~, if they believe they have been denied accommodations by the Fairfield Pubic Schools- (Policy 5125, Approved as Amended 9/14/10).

- 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~~ **should consider** performance against job description responsibilities and a review and analysis of approved goals and objectives. ~~Objectives and goals~~ **Goals and objectives** are generally established in September. The Board of Education reviews the Superintendent's three-year contract and may offer a new three-year contract (Source).

VIII. **Administrative Matters**

- A. **By-laws** – The Board of Education has adopted By-laws, last revised on ~~December 1, 2011 March 10, 2015~~ **February 13, 2018**. At its annual Organizational Meeting in November of each year, it shall review and revise these By-laws as the Board of Education deems appropriate and approve changes in December. The By-laws may also be revised at any ~~Regular and Special M~~ **regular and Special M** meeting of the Board of Education as may be properly noticed (By-laws Article VI).
- B. **Board of Education Annual Self-Evaluation** – The Board of Education shall conduct an annual self-evaluation of its policies, practices, and internal operating procedures at a ~~Special M~~ **Special M** 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 CABA sponsored conferences. Board of Education members interested in attending a conference or class should make that interest known through the Chair to the Superintendent's office (Board Practice).

- E. Information Requests From Board of Education Members** – The Superintendent provides study materials and information required to assist the Board of Education in researching and evaluating proposals before the Board of Education. Members are welcome to seek additional information to aid in their discussion and final action. The Board of Education, 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 **that helps the Board members make better-informed decisions about policies affecting student achievement district-wide**, only from the Superintendent with a copy of all such requests given to the Board of Education Chair. If the information sought by either the Board of Education, the Chair, Committee Chairs, or individual members is readily available, every effort will be made to include it in the Friday Packet for Board of Education members, provided it is requested in a timely manner. If the information requested is not readily available and will redirect staff time, the request for the information or data ~~shall~~**must** be made as a Board. ~~requires staff research time which conflicts with other priorities, the Superintendent will consult with the Board of Education Chair be given direction by a majority of the Board of Education 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 ~~in~~**en**sure information requested does not put an undue burden on staff and c) to encourage Board of Education 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 By-law Article I, Section 2, paragraph B, number 1).
- F. Fairfield Public Schools Website** – The Fairfield Public Schools maintains a website to aid in communicating to parents and citizens, www.fairfieldschools.org. A wealth of information is available and specifically includes, within the Board of Education pages, a list of all scheduled Board of Education 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 strategie~~ **and plans** 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 Meeting Agenda Packets** – Board meetings are more effective when members read the materials and information within the packet prior to the meeting so it will not need to be presented orally at a Board of Education meeting. Board of Education meeting agenda packets ~~should~~ **will** be distributed **electronically** five days before a meeting- (By-laws Article V, Section 3A). ~~Packets are distributed electronically on Thursday and sent to Board of Education members by hard copy on Friday prior to each Board meeting.~~
- ~~**I. Recycling of Board of Education Materials** – Empty Friday Packet envelopes and empty Board of Education meeting agenda folders can be left on the back table in the conference room for recycling. (Board Practice)~~
- J. Use of ID Badge While Visiting School Facilities** – During school hours and office hours, please wear your Board of Education ID 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- (Policy 3564, Approved 8/27/04).
- K. Individual Board of Education Email Addresses** – ~~Each~~ **All** members of the Board of Education will be assigned a district email address and may make use of that or their 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 Board of Education Headquarters** – There is covered parking available under the building at the Board of Education offices. There is a vending machine in the Board of Education staff break room outside of the Board room. Both may be used by Board of Education members- (Board Practice).

IX. Definitions and Acronyms (Most definitions were taken from: *“Becoming a Better Board Member, A Guide to Effective School Board Service”* 3rd 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.

~~**BoE** (Board of Education) – This abbreviation and/or phrase will be used whenever communicating about topics that are discussed by the elected Board of Education or its related committees.~~

CABE – The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education: Serves local and regional Boards of eEducation. It is a membership organization made up of Connecticut Boards of eEducation, including 151 school districts representing 90% of the state’s public school population.

CAPSS – The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents: 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: 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: A not-for-profit organization working to strengthen elementary and secondary education in Connecticut. Its mission is to offer exemplary programs and services that promote excellence in education of all children.

CEA – Connecticut Education Association: 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: 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: The standard assessment administrated to students in grades 3 through 8. Students are assessed in the content areas of reading, mathematics, writing and science (grades 5 and 8).

COLT (Central Office Leadership Team) – This abbreviation and/or phrase reflects the Superintendent’s senior leadership team and is currently composed of the Superintendent, ~~Deputy Superintendent~~Chief Academic Officer, ~~Director of Elementary Education, Director of Secondary Education~~ Executive Director, Innovation, Curriculum

and Programs, Executive Director of Special Education and ~~Special Programs Student Services, Director of Human Resources~~-Executive Director of Personnel and Legal Services, Executive Director of Operations, and Director of Finance and Business Services.

DLT (District Leadership Team) – This abbreviation and/or phrase reflects an expanded key leadership team and ~~is~~ currently comprised ~~s~~ of the COLT Team plus elementary and middle school principals, high school headmasters and housemasters, middle school assistant principals, curriculum leaders, and special education coordinators.

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 3 academies have been divided into 9 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.

FOI – Freedom of Information: The Freedom of Information (FOI) Commission publishes rules and regulations to facilitate the informed and efficient exchange of information between governmental bodies and the general public.

FPS (Fairfield Public Schools) – This abbreviation and/or phrase will be used whenever communicating about topics that refer to the school district in its entirety.

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 4th, 8th and 12th 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 regions – 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.

SDO (School District Offices) – This is located at 501 Kings Highway, Fairfield, CT and is the location of the Superintendent's office and the offices of the Central Office Leadership Team, along with support staff who give guidance, direction, and support to the Fairfield Public Schools on a day to day basis. It is also the location (generally) for all regular and special meetings of the Board of Education.