

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, December 11, 2018**

**NOTICE:** A full meeting recording can be obtained from Fairfield Public Schools. Please call 203-255-8371 for more information and/or see the FPS website (under Board Meeting Minutes) for a link to FAIRTV.

**Voting Summary:**

Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call

Chairman Christine Vitale called the Regular meeting to order at 7:40PM. Present were members Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Leeper, Philip Dwyer, Jessica Gerber, Christine Vitale, Nick Aysseh, Jennifer Jacobsen, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, and Jeff Peterson. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, FLHS student representatives Ms. Coolidge and Mr. Holtz, FWHS student representatives Ms. Solari and Mr. Rivera, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 25 members of the public.

Ms. Pytko moved/Ms. Leeper seconded to change the order of topics on the agenda and switch the Facilities Update with the Alumni Survey Results presentation. Motion passed 9-0.

Old Business

*Approval of Amendment to 2019-2020 Student Calendar*

Ms. Leeper moved/Mr. Dwyer seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the amendment to the 2019-2020 Student Calendar, as enclosed.” Motion passed 8-1 (Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Pytko against).

*Adoption of Policies*

*4118.51/4218.51: Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified, Social Media*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education adopt Policy 4118.51/4218.51: Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified, Social Media” Motion passed 8-1 (Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Pytko against).

*3240: Business and Non-Instructional Operations, Tuition Fees*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education adopt Policy 3240: Business and Non-Instructional Operations, Tuition Fees.” Motion passed 9-0.

*Approval of 2019-2020 Capital Non-Recurring Projects*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Aysseh seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the 2019-2020 Capital Non-Recurring Projects” Motion passed 9-0.

New Business

*Approval of the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) Survey*

Ms. Pytko moved/Mr. Dwyer seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve student participation in the RYASAP survey.” Motion passed 8-0-1 (Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson in favor; Mrs. Jacobsen abstained).

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Leeper seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Special, Organizational and Regular Minutes of November 13, 2018.” Motion passed 9-0.

Adjournment

Mr. Aysseh moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:54PM.

## Detailed Minutes:

Ms. Pytko moved, Ms. Leeper seconded to change the order of topics on the agenda and switch the Facilities Update with the Alumni Survey Results presentation.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

### Student Reports

Mr. Rivera and Ms. Solari reported for Fairfield Warde: The Best Buddies club hosted its annual Friendsgiving; Mr. Frattaroli and the cast and crew the of fall drama *The Three Sisters* completed several amazing performances; the annual Ludlowe/Warde Thanksgiving football game had an enthusiastic crowd and Ludlowe won by 1 point; all are looking forward to the Carillon concert, including 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are invited for December 19<sup>th</sup>; Mrs. Murphy, whose brother was a secret service agent for President George HW Bush, gave a heartfelt tribute to the former President; the Barlow's restaurant is open, offers catering and details can be found on the website.

Ms. Coolidge and Mr. Holtz reported for Fairfield Ludlowe: The Red Cross Club blood drive was very successful; the Falcon Footprint campaign is underway; St. Vincent's smoke-stoppers program gave a presentation on the dangers of smoking and vaping; the International Save a Life Tour gave a presentation on the dangers of distracted driving; the football team had an exciting season and finished 7-3; the boys soccer and girls volleyball teams made it to states; the drama club performed *A Wilder Time* under the leadership of Ms. Kondziella; and there was a great turnout for alumni day.

Ms. Vitale wished the students luck with their applications and also wished them Happy Holidays.

### Public Comment

Matthew Hallock, Somerville Street: Moving ECC students to McKinley may solve racial imbalance.

### Old Business

#### *Facilities Update*

Dr. Jones presented a report on the facility challenges facing ECC, which include capacity issues and inadequate peer ratios. Several priority short-term solutions were researched, taking into account ADA access, HVAC, playground, move-in ready, PK restrooms, adequate building space, location and staff parking. ECC cannot be expanded at its current Warde location. After researching multiple facilities within the district and at other locations, the staff recommended Stratfield as the best location for the 2<sup>nd</sup> ECC site beginning in September 2019, with 5 ECC classrooms. This will lead to some programming changes including a uniform 5-day PK program and the inclusion of PE and Music at both sites; the CLC students will remain at the Warde site. Associated costs will be outlined in the Operating Budget. The long-term solution will be addressed at a later time.

Mr. Peterson noted that the ECC/Warde map incorrectly marked playground space as a blank area and he wanted to make clear to the public that there is no room for expansion in that area.

Ms. Pytko expressed some reservations with Stratfield's multi-level accessibility and PK's proximity to the nurse's office and playground. Dr. Jones said that the PK would be on the first floor; individual student needs will be considered during the rostering process. Mr. Cullen added that the PK playgrounds at both ECC/Warde and Stratfield have rubberized surfaces.

Dr. Jones said the Burr PK, as a general education PK, would be rolled in to the ECC PK program. This improves the peer ratio and decreases caseloads. This will impact the Racial Imbalance Plan, which is scheduled to be updated for the state in June. Mr. Mancusi added that the 2<sup>nd</sup> ECC location will operate the same as the Warde ECC, but will not have the CLC.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly expressed some concern over PK bathroom facilities at Stratfield. Ms. McGoey said the current PK classrooms will remain, and the additional PK classrooms might use the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms and gang bathrooms. Mr. Mancusi added that adaptive equipment for bathrooms can be ordered.

Mrs. Jacobsen asked if moving the entire ECC to McKinley would require moving McKinley students. Dr. Jones said it would, based on moving approximately 150 ECC students.

Several Board members hoped the PK feeder pattern could be reconsidered, and be more reflective of the Parks & Rec sports model. Dr. Jones said transportation can be a complex issue; unique routes will be explored. Mr. Dwyer said that in the past, grandfathering became expensive; maintaining a reasonable balance should be a goal. Mr. Aysseh and Ms. Leeper agreed on the importance of planning long-term for PK, and including it as part of the redistricting discussion.

Mrs. Vitale said the sense of community at ECC is very important. Mr. Mancusi and Ms. McGoey said parents have given positive feedback; Stratfield works closely with Mrs. Bruno to expand PK parent connections.

The Board had several questions on elementary enrollment projections. Dr. Jones said Burr has both CLC and ELL populations and one school should not have an overload of unique programming. Additionally, Stratfield is closer to ECC/Warde, and has 6 classrooms that can be used for PK.

Ms. Vitale said this will be a voting item at the next meeting, and the public is invited to share comments at the upcoming Town Hall. Dr. Jones requested direction from the Board in the event of a no vote, and offered Board members a tour of Stratfield.

#### *Approval of Amendment to 2019-2020 Student Calendar*

Ms. Leeper moved, Mr. Dwyer seconded that the Board of Education approve the amendment to the 2019-2020 Student Calendar, as enclosed.

Dr. Jones said the calendar amendment was needed to adjust the number of teacher work days. Mr. Aysseh and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly requested middle school conference data be collected to determine if all three conference days are essential.

#### **Motion Passed: 8-1**

Favor: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson  
Oppose: Ms. Pytko

#### *Adoption of Policies*

4118.51/4218.51: Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified, Social Media

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education adopt Policy 4118.51/4218.51: Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified, Social Media.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said this policy has spanned 2 years of discussion and postponements; the common thread is to provide definitive guidance to staff.

#### *Public Comment:*

Bob Smoler, FEA President: Define social media, remove vague language and annually train teachers on policies and procedures of district.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said definitions can be provided in regulations, but she is comfortable with the “or similarly inappropriate communications” that Mr. Smoler finds too vague. Initially, the language was very specific, but usage and social media change very quickly. Dr. Jones is working on a handbook for new staff that addresses policies. Mr. Aysseh questioned whether the vague language is enforceable. Dr. Jones added that the regulations help to implement policy and can change with the times.

Ms. Pytko said more specificity is needed; this policy seems too vague.

**Motion Passed: 8-1**

Favor: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson  
Oppose: Ms. Pytko

*3240: Business and Non-Instructional Operations, Tuition Fees*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education adopt Policy 3240: Business and Non-Instructional Operations, Tuition Fees.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Approval of 2019-2020 Capital Non-Recurring Projects*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Aysseh seconded that the Board of Education approve the 2019-2020 Capital Non-Recurring Projects.

Dr. Jones said TMS Flooring was added as a Capital Non-Recurring Project. Mr. Cullen said the new total for the eight projects is \$2.78M. The WFC project was pulled out and added into the 2019-2020 Proposed Budget maintenance list.

Mr. Aysseh recently toured TMS and is in favor of the project. The school is in dire need of this project and he asked for the amount of contingency that was built into the project cost. Mr. Cullen said the contractor is well-known in the area and he is comfortable with the pricing; the contingency is not large. The project involves multiple areas, covers every area in need of repair and can be cut back if needed.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mr. Aysseh had several questions on mitigating flooding, particularly after project completion. Mr. Cullen said all of the areas in the project have had water intrusion. The repair and fix should last 10-15 years. Flooding will be addressed with a water run-off pit, sump pumps, re-pointing of an outside brick wall, re-coating a parapet wall on the roof, and rerouting a drain. Ultimately, increasing the size of the town's water drainage pipe is planned. All of these will help with the flooding in the cafeteria. A sensor for the cafeteria at the lowest level automatically alerts maintenance when needed. Repairing all older areas would be a much bigger project than nine weeks and a structural engineer would be needed.

Mrs. Gerber asked about the overall percentage of flooring included in the project, and the condition of the flooring that is excluded from the project. Mr. Cullen said he will provide the percentage, some of the 2005 flooring is failing but not all. With this repair, TMS should not require any additional flooring work for 10-15 years.

Mr. Aysseh questioned whether a long-term fix would be more cost-effective than the 10 year project, and requested it be costed out before presentation to Town bodies.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if a price escalation was expected for the IT project. Ms. Byrnes said the pricing would be held unless there is an egregious change with the tariffs, as these are manufactured in China.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Alumni Survey*

Mr. Hatzis, Mr. Ebling and Mr. Cummings presented the results of the alumni survey, which was administered to the Class of 2016; the response rate was 27.3%. 94.3% of respondents reported being better prepared or as prepared as peers when attending college. A focus of the survey was tied to the Vision of a Graduate. The areas of collaboration, communication and critical thinking received a range of Favorable to Extremely Favorable; responsibility and innovation received Neutral to Very Favorable; goal-directed resilient learners received Unfavorable to Very Favorable ratings. To address some of the concern areas, both high schools have implemented Career Day, invited alumni to speak on careers,

increased promotion of Financial Literacy class, and adopted social and civic expectations. Overall, students gave a Very Favorable rating to their present feelings about their years at high school.

Mr. Peterson asked whether FPS designed the survey and if it represented an improvement from previous years. Mr. Hatzis said the responses have been steady with few fluctuations. Futuristics, the company that designed the survey, offered a bank of questions that the district could choose from, and over 400 schools that also use the survey provide comparison data. Unknown factors such as school size or response rate make it hard to validate comparison data and percentile rankings. Most of the respondents attended college.

Mr. Aysseh noticed that most respondents were AP or honors students and only 4% of all of the '16 graduates (or 14 ½ of total respondents) were not, resulting in a lopsided representation of students. He asked the headmasters if they thought the survey was valuable. Ms. Leeper felt the results were not statistically significant. She noticed the low rating for money management and commended the favorable rating of overall high school experience. Mr. Ebling and Mr. Hatzis said that programming would not change because of the survey, but it does show trends and also validates work that is being done. Mrs. Gerber added that many students did not fill out the survey, even though they enjoyed high school and had a successful 1<sup>st</sup> year college experience.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked what was being done with the data and is not convinced that it is disproportionate. Mr. Cummings said the essential work of the district at all levels is to improve classroom instruction; the primary means to do this is examination of student work to see if learning targets have been achieved. There is a need to shift focus to instruction of curriculum. Intervention systems are also for students who are ahead. Mr. Hatzis said he shared results with faculty; the survey helps to support social/emotional intervention efforts. Mr. Ebling said he keeps the data in perspective and is not inclined to make a major shift based on one data point.

Mrs. Vitale requested some feedback on extra-curricular activities, and felt the lower scores for some may be tied to the budget and proper funding. Mr. Hatzis said there are so many activities to choose from, the variety may lead to lower scores.

#### *Board Goal Discussion*

Mrs. Vitale requested Board feedback on the approach to advance the Board goal that was approved on October 9.

Dr. Jones contacted Milone and MacBroom at the Board's request, to confirm that the Board might again need some redistricting analysis. Some of their previous work could be updated and used to address redistricting without having to start from scratch, but they have not yet been given specific direction to do so. Dr. Jones added that a redistricting discussion is required prior to June for racial imbalance and to assist with Mill Hill.

Ms. Pytko said the Board had agreed to have the goal discussion as a whole and not in subcommittee; the Board as a whole should provide the charge for Milone and MacBroom. Mr. Aysseh suggested a workshop to have a few concentrated hours on this important topic; the community should have input. Following that, direction can be given to Milone and MacBroom. Mrs. Gerber suggested having a second meeting in February dedicated to the Board goal. Mrs. Jacobsen and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly suggested holding several dedicated meetings.

Board discussion followed on the type of meetings needed to address the Board goal and whether they should be less formal. Mrs. Vitale said this is an emotional topic and the Board wants to be as transparent as possible. A few dates were suggested in February and March, which will be scheduled and noticed as soon as possible.

## New Business

### *First Reading of Policy 5141.21, Students – Administration of Medication in the Schools*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said changes are in response to state statute and she requested the Board be given a link to the previous policy to have a reference of what was changed. She requested that questions be sent in advance; Jill Mitchell may need to be consulted.

### *Approval of Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) Survey*

Ms. Pytko moved, Mr. Dwyer seconded that the Board of Education approve student participation in the RYASAP survey.

Dr. Jones said the RYASAP survey has been given in the district for many years beginning in 1985, and is helpful to the FPS health classes, Fairfield Cares and other organizations. Parents will be able to opt-out of the survey, but few have done so in the past.

Mrs. Jacobsen said she will be abstaining from the vote, due to her work with Fairfield Cares.

### **Motion Passed: 8-0-1**

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson

Abstain: Mrs. Jacobsen

## Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Leeper seconded that the Board of Education approve the Special, Organizational and Regular Minutes of November 13, 2018.

### **Motion Passed: 9-0**

## Superintendent Report

Dr. Jones reported:

- Winter concerts Carillon and Candlelight are taking place soon.
- Innovation Spaces at the high schools are being used to bring different subject areas together to collaborate using new technology such as virtual reality goggles.
- Room 10 at Dwight has been restored and is ready for occupancy. The bathroom work is completed; work is progressing on rebuilding the wall and re-opening the restrooms.
- According to Mr. Morabito, the Mill Hill project is back on track and the architect is ahead of schedule. FPS will be monitoring the project during the spring.
- Staff are working hard on the budget. New this year, BoF and BoS will have separate budget meetings.
- The Warde/Ludlowe football game was excellent, very cold, with lots of great school spirit.

Mrs. Gerber said Mr. Quinn is prepared to get the Mill Hill project on the BoS agenda as soon as it is ready; the project seems on target to meet June 30. All are aware of the budget meeting schedule. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked the BoE Chairman to monitor the project. Should it not meet the deadline, she requested the Board have a conversation regarding shifting the waterfall.

## Committee/Liaison Reports

- Mrs. Vitale said the Committee Liaison assignments have been updated and she has appointed Mrs. Jacobsen as the new liaison to the General Assembly.
- Ms. Pytko said the SEPTA Cookie Walk is on Wednesday, December 19.
- Ms. Leeper reported for the Finance Committee: Details on advertising revenue can be found in the Friday Packet, and the information has been submitted to the Policy Committee for review.

- Mrs. Gerber reported for FLHS BC: The committee is expected to appear before the Board in January to request project acceptance and close-out.
- Mrs. Gerber reported for the MH BC: Meeting is scheduled tomorrow night.
- Mrs. Vitale reported for the Sherman Building Committee: The kiss & go area is being revisited, which is impacting other renovations.
- Mrs. Vitale reported for the PTAC: The Bike Commission presented; Mary Hogue presented about sustainability in Town, PTAC website is being upgraded, and they are preparing for their budget workshop in January.
- Mr. Aysseh reported for Board of Health: The Health Director mentioned the repairs at Dwight.
- Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reported for Policy Committee: Requested administration input on the upcoming Homework Policy. Public should be aware it is being discussed and feedback is requested at Policy meetings.
- Mr. Peterson reported for BoF: The 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report was discussed and there were a few questions on staffing and the Warde turf field.
- Mr. Peterson reported for HH BC: Construction is proceeding, students will move in after the break. A study is being done on air quality, asbestos is being remediated.

### Open Board Comment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the Town is holding strategic planning meetings, and she encouraged residents to fill out the survey on the vision for Fairfield. Mrs. Vitale said she will bring that information to the PTAC.

Mrs. Jacobsen wished all Happy Holidays and New Year.

Mrs. Vitale congratulated Ms. Deasy on her new baby boy.

Mr. Peterson read a statement on a new landmark NIH screen time study, showing that excessive screen time results in physical changes to children's developing brains. He encouraged parents to pay attention to the study.

### Public Comment

*Bonnie Rotelli*, Merritt Street: Thanked the Board for bringing the ECC item to a vote. Concerned with feeder pattern, location of OT/PT rooms and their proximity to PK classrooms.

### Adjournment

Mr. Aysseh moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

### Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:54PM

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Jessica Gerber*  
*Fairfield Board of Education*  
*Secretary*