

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, March 12, 2019**

**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 7:33PM. 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 reps Ms. Coolidge and Ms. Phillips and FWHS student reps Mr. Rivera and Ms. Solari, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 40 members of the public.

**Old Business**

*Adoption of Policy 5141.21 – Students – Administration of Medication in the Schools*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mr. Peterson seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education adopt Policy 5141.21 – Students – Administration of Medication in the Schools.” Motion passed 9-0.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to extend the meeting to 11:15PM. Motion passed 6-3 (Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly in favor; Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Peterson against).

**New Business**

*Appointment of Superintendent Search Firm*

Ms. Pytko moved/Mr. Peterson seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education appoint Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates as the search firm to assist in hiring a new Superintendent of Schools and authorize the Chairman of the Board to negotiate a contract based on the response to the RFP dated 2/1/19.” Motion passed 9-0.

*Approval of Amended 2019-2020 Student Calendar due to Primary Date: April 28, 2020*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the 2019-2020 amended student calendar, as enclosed, to reflect April 28, 2020 as a non-school day.” Motion passed 9-0.

**Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Pytko moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion, “that the Board of Education approve the following minutes:

January 8, 2019 (Regular)

January 15, 2019 (Special)

January 22, 2019 (Special)

January 24, 2019 (Regular and Special.”

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 11:12PM.

## Detailed Minutes:

### Student Reports

Mr. Rivera and Ms. Solari reported for Fairfield Warde: Wrestling coach Shaughnessy recently celebrated the team’s 400<sup>th</sup> victory; the Girl’s Co-op Ski Team won the CT State Championship for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year; the Dance Team won the State Championship in Hip-Hop; the Bowling Team came in 2<sup>nd</sup> in their league; numerous teams qualified for state tournaments including girls basketball, girls and boys ice hockey, girls and boys indoor track, gymnastics, cheerleading, boys swimming and co-op fencing; Warde hosted a blood drive for seniors and teachers; 8<sup>th</sup> graders toured Warde; 22 students were recently honored at the Mustang Values Personified (MVP) breakfast; the Junior Achievement Business Challenge Team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> to FLHS; and the jazz band placed first at Norwalk’s high school jazz competition.

Ms. Coolidge and Ms. Phillips reported for Fairfield Ludlowe: The Freshman Forum was held on March 7; the Operation Hope Dinner will take place on March 21; Preparations for Project Runway are underway; varsity cheerleaders will be travelling to Disney World to compete and defend their national title; NEASC accreditation visit is taking place; juniors are in the process of registering with the National Honor Society; Mr. Parisi and Mr. Nulf held their ‘Taste of the Trail’ event recounting the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Mr. Peterson appreciated the FLHS NEASC reception and the wonderful performance by the student acapella group.

### Presentations

#### *District Improvement Plan (DIP) Mid-year Update*

Mr. Cummings referenced the DIP update and responded to Board questions:

- Items ‘in progress’ are expected to be completed on time.
- Low enrollment in the ELL Newcomer Academy was due to fewer students moving in at Levels 1-2. Enrollment will be monitored and the program can be implemented at any level if needed.
- World Language tech apps for students in K-2 are being considered partly due to budgetary reasons, and partly due to not having adequate staff or enough instructional time. The idea is to integrate an interactive program with simple skills such as letters, numbers and colors, in a center-style format.
- Feedback from the Science testing is expected to follow the SBA timeline, in late summer.
- The new Middle School schedule will be presented to the Board in May/June 2019, but not implemented until 2020-21.

- The new Elementary Facilitator position has been an unqualified success and has accomplished its goal to free up principals to be in classrooms and build sped leadership skills. The district is fortunate to have people with excellent skillsets hired to do this work.
- Budget holds on technology do not impact this list.
- The new ADA-compliant website is expected to be live over the summer.

### *World Language Curriculum – Status Update*

Ms. Frankel (Coordinator), Ms. Mwambulukutu, Ms. Seara, Ms. Cardoso and Ms. Shore presented the World Language (WL) Curriculum update. The group highlighted the differences in the 2009 vs. 2015 curriculum and gave classroom examples from grades 3-12. World Language now uses authentic sources as primary resources, rather than textbooks. The use of Chromebooks facilitates the use of online sources and a bank of authentic resources is shared. In addition, WL has moved from teaching grammar in isolation, to teaching grammar structure in context. One of the examples of the shift from 2009, was a student’s descriptive letter, written to the President of the Dominican Republic, which garnered a written response.

One of the presentation slides stated “We are no longer teaching students about a language, we are teaching students to use the language.” Proficiency levels are identified as Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. Proficiency is tested with the STAMP and ALIRA tests. There have been some adjustments of assessments and rubrics since the curriculum was first implemented. Some of the next steps include awarding the Seal of Biliteracy to qualifying students and instituting a new course – Introduction to Culture and Communication.

The group responded to questions:

- The Biliteracy Award requires English and reaching Int/Med Proficiency in another language.
- The STAMP test will not count towards a grade this year for seniors.
- Ms. Phillips said, as a student, she experienced the transition to the new curriculum and felt more grammar instruction would be helpful. Ms. Frankel said traditional instruction of grammar encourages memorization and rehearsed use of language; being understood is the goal. Ms. Frankel emphasized that grammar is taught within context and AP scores have not dropped.
- The baseline proficiency tests are STAMP and ALIRA.
- Authentic materials are considered superior to a textbook, as materials are created by native speakers and contain current events. One source for Latin is a daily newspaper.
- Common assessments ensure consistent delivery of curriculum. Resources and materials are shared.
- AP is not offered for Italian or Mandarin. The earlier students are exposed to language, the easier it is to learn it. Middle school students are exposed to Latin, Chinese and Italian as possible courses for 9<sup>th</sup> grade during the high school scheduling process.

### *Business Curriculum - Status Update*

Ms. Terwilliger (Coordinator), Ms. McGuigan, Mr. Zhitomi, Ms. Finn and Ms. Moses presented the Business Curriculum Update.

The Business Curriculum offers 21 courses with 4 AP classes, offering a broad array that touches upon the top college majors such as computer science, communications, business and economics. The Entrepreneurship course was featured on News 8, as students managed the development, sales and marketing of their clothing product. During the previous 5 years, FPS students scored higher than the CT average on AP tests in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Computer Science. Students also collaborate to service outside clients, for example, marketing students work with art and video production students to develop client advertising. The Business Dept. has also grown tremendously since 2009, and more students are taking more business classes every year. Recognizing the growth, the FPS Chapter of the prestigious National Business Honor Society was founded in 2018.

In addition, the Business department was excited to share:

- FLHS has won the JA Business Challenge 5 years in a row
- A partnership with World Language led to an upcoming overseas field trip to China
- Partnership with the Amazon Future Engineering Program

Next steps include a continuous quality education, reinforcing workplace competencies and successful learning experiences.

The presenters responded to Board questions:

- Low enrollment for the Financial Literacy course is being addressed through student marketing of the course, and enrollment is starting to grow. Ms. Leeper said she felt this was a very important course for all students and would like to see more students enrolled.
- The gender gap continues to close.
- Computer class enrollment is usually maxed out, in part due to introduction of coding at the middle school level.
- AP testing determines mastery for the graduation requirement, the Business department has discussed this but there is no other test or competition at this time that fulfills the mastery requirement. They can work on this.
- The Business Honor Society membership has GPA requirements, but anyone can join the Future Business Leaders of America.
- Ethics is integrated almost daily into business courses. For example, accounting students study Enron and insider trading.
- The curriculum changes by keeping up with trends. Chromebooks and the computer lab have been very helpful.

Mr. Aysseh congratulated the business apparel students and encouraged them to continue on as entrepreneurs. Mrs. Vitale thanked staff and BOE members that voted for the block schedule, allowing students to take more electives. Mr. Rivera added that his schedule included several business courses and he will be studying Business at UCONN next year.

## Old Business

### *Adoption of Policy 5141.21 – Students – Administration of Medication in the Schools*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mr. Peterson seconded that the Board of Education adopt Policy 5141.21 – Students – Administration of Medication in the Schools.

Mr. Aysseh asked for a minor formatting change on page 3 and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly agreed.

## Motion Passed: 9-0

## New Business

### *Review of Redistricting Guiding Principles*

Mrs. Vitale requested Board input on the (8) Redistricting Guiding Principles, as previously approved by Board in 2015.

#1 – *‘Established neighborhoods should be maintained...’* Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Dwyer. Ms. Pytko and Mr. Peterson discussed striking this item as too restrictive.

#2 – *‘Consider Impact on Busing and Walkers...’* Mr. Peterson said this item should be stricken. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly mentioned that parents tend to drive students to school, even if within walking distance. Mrs. Gerber was sensitive to the possibility of increasing busing costs, and recounted how a past redistricting solution would have bused walkers who were within sight of their school. Ms. Pytko questioned what was meant by a ‘long bus ride.’ Generally, the Board agreed that bus rides should not exceed one hour. Dr. Jones added that distances for ridership could be expanded, and current busses are not running empty due to proactive measures.

#3 – *‘Safety issues shall be considered...’* After some discussion, the Board generally felt this was an obvious requirement. Students in unsafe walk zones are bused.

#4 – *‘Phase out all temporary solutions (portables).’* Mr. Aysseh agreed with this item and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly suggested that no plan should increase or encourage the use of portables.

#5 – *‘Headroom Capacities – 90% shall be targeted...’* Mrs. Vitale said this will be part of the community discussion.

#6 – *‘Maintain District Guidelines for class size.’* The Board agreed to keep this item.

#7 – *‘Siblings should attend the same schools...’* Mrs. Gerber said this item would require grandfathering, which previously cost the district \$1M in transportation alone. Mr. Peterson said consideration of any changes to the feeder-plan will require community input. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she is not interested in tying the hands of the consultant.

#8 – *‘Create the least amount of disruption.’* Many Board members agreed that it is time for comprehensive redistricting, and this item does not apply. Mr. Peterson thinks that a top to bottom redistricting needs to happen. Ms. Pytko said the town has changed over the last nine years and it makes sense to have a change in facilities.

Mr. Dwyer said it might be a good idea to add a disclaimer that these principles are guidelines for the consultant. Mrs. Vitale added that the Facilities Planning Principles in the Long-range Facilities Plan have lots of duplication and public input will help determine if there should be a new document or if it should be eliminated.

*Facilities Update*

Dr. Jones referenced the Mill Hill floor plan, showing the current usage and layout of classrooms including instructional areas for sped, art, music, band and strings. OT/PT had been taking place in the trailer, but has since been moved to the stage. Band and strings also does not have its own space. Even if sticking with 378, expansion would still be needed to have sufficient space for current usage.

The lease for WFC was renewed for one more year, allowing more time for fixes. Jen Jacobsen expressed frustration at the landlord's response to the deficiencies, addressing only 3 out of 20. Mr. Cullen said the delay could be due to the realization that contractors and engineers are needed to fix some of the items. Dr. Jones added that finding new space and moving the program would require close to a full year's notice.

*ECC Facilities Update*

Mr. Mancusi presented the results from the PK rubric used to review facilities for the ECC program. Important long-term factors for consideration included ADA accessibility, HVAC, playground, move-in ready, classrooms with restrooms, building functionality and location. The results of the rubric ratings showed that Burr ranked first, followed by Holland Hill, McKinley, Riverfield, Stratfield, Sherman and North Stratfield. The strengths and weaknesses of each building were discussed. Building a restroom brings a significant cost to any choice.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to extend the meeting to 11:15PM.

**Motion Passed: 6-3**

Favor: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Peterson

Dr. Jones added that the Mill Hill all-abilities playground is not appropriate as an ECC playground. North Stratfield's rating using the rubric, would move up to 3<sup>rd</sup> place if it had air conditioning. NSS would still need a playground costing \$25K-\$35K. Location is also a factor.

*Appointment of Superintendent Search Firm*

Ms. Pytko moved, Mr. Peterson seconded that the Board of Education appoint Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates as the search firm to assist in hiring a new Superintendent of Schools and authorize the Chairman of the Board to negotiate a contract based on the response to the RFP dated 2/1/19.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Approval of Amended 2019-2020 Student Calendar due to Primary Date: April 28, 2020*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the 2019-2020 amended student calendar, as enclosed, to reflect April 28, 2020 as a non-school day.

Mr. Aysseh requested the reason be noted on the calendar, similar to other no-school days.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

**Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Pytko moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the following minutes:

January 8, 2019 (Regular)

January 15, 2019 (Special)

January 22, 2019 (Special)

January 24, 2019 (Regular and Special).

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

**Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Jones reported:

- NEASC has approved the renewed accreditation at Warde. Once the report is received, it will be shared.
- Ludlowe's NEASC renewal is currently under review and the site visit is going well.
- The climate surveys have been sent to parents and staff, with double the response rate from last year. Over 1000 staff have already responded. The approach was a bit different this year. Similar and duplicate questions were eliminated, making the survey much shorter; but there are no new questions. In addition, the survey will also be used for teacher evaluation, which eliminates the need for a redundant survey. This ensures yearly feedback on climate, rather than biennial feedback.

**Committee/Liaison Report**

*Mr. Peterson/BOF:* Budget hearings begin on Thursday; the BoE presents the budget to BoF on March 18.

*Mr. Peterson/HHBC:* Holland Hill is on track, Chairman Quinn is trying to ensure that air conditioning will be in place for graduation.

*Ms. Leeper/RTM:* RTM passed the capital non-recurring items as presented.

*Mrs. Vitale/PTAC:* There was a good turnout for the report to PTAC.

*Mrs. Vitale/RSBC:* RSBC is looking to revise the edspect to exclude the back drop-off loop and possibly the stage renovation. This may come back to the Board in the next month or so. If Phase IV is needed, the building committee will take guidance from the Board of Selectmen.

*Mrs. Jacobsen/Legislation:* Mrs. Jacobsen plans to advocate on her own behalf by speaking out at Friday's legislative public hearing. She welcomed Board members to do the same and raised the idea of advocating as a Board. Mr. Peterson added that many proposed bills, including HB 7319, could directly hit the district, as it allows the BOE to levy taxes and borrow funds, radically reshaping the way the town

currently conducts its business. He suggested the Board discuss these items more regularly as a whole. Mr. Aysseh agreed. Mrs. Vitale encouraged board members to provide testimony.

*Ms. Pytko/SEPTA:* SEPTA Sweet 16 will take place on April 6.

### **Open Board Comment**

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said SEPTA is accepting auction items for SEPTA's Sweet 16. The 15-20 Odyssey of the Minds teams are competing on Saturday and Ms. Pytko has agreed to be a judge.

Ms. Pytko said she is very interested to attend the Town-wide Choral Festival.

Mr. Dwyer welcomed back Executive Director of Human Resources, Ms. Deasy.

### **Public Comment**

*Jill Vergara, Old Post Road:* Asked the Board to reconsider the views on walkers and bussers; that is the most important guiding principle for redistricting.

### **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 11:12PM

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