

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, November 17, 2015**

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.

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

Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Present were members Anthony Calabrese, Eileen Liu-McCormack, Marc Patten, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Others present were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Ludlowe student representatives Mihir Nene and Isabella Frango; Warde student representatives Ashley Agrello and Brittany Shuster; members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 30 members of the public.

Student Reports

Student representatives Mihir Nene and Isabella Frango reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School: Faculty and staff handled the lockdown on October 23 very well and students were grateful for the emotional support that was offered; the first advisory activity period last Friday featured inspirational videos; congratulations were extended to the newly elected board members; Boys Soccer and Girls Volleyball are FCIAC champions; the Girls Volleyball team will play in the State Championship game; the second marking period has begun; seniors took advantage of the opportunities offered during the administration of the PSAT.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the Sticks for Soldiers event, the fundraiser for wounded soldiers. The students weren't sure when this event was taking place.

Student representatives Ashley Agrello and Brittany Shuster reported for Fairfield Warde High School: The homecoming dance had a great turnout and the pep rally was great; the Cross Country Boys team advanced to the New England Tournament; the Unified Sports teams also had some good competition at several events; during PSAT administration, 9th graders participated in kindness and compassion assemblies and 12th graders were involved with college and career workshops; the lockdown was unsettling but teachers remained calm and the upperclassmen helped the underclassmen when classes resumed on Monday; students also appreciated the emotional support given in response to the lockdown; French exchange students stayed for 10 days and that was a fun experience.

Dr. Title clarified that all schools district-wide were in a lockdown; he appreciated the comments from students and the Police Chief said that the students and teachers were the real heroes.

Public Comment

None.

Old Business

Review of Second Year Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans

Mrs. Leffert gave a Protraxx presentation on the Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans to update the Board on the electronic side of what an administrator would see when an evaluation is performed; there is an attempt to merge the view with what goes on in the classroom. She explained that it is essentially a living document as it is constantly being added to and updated; she also explained the timeline and the goal-setting process. She reviewed the percentages for the four focus areas; 45% targets for learning for students; 5% alignment with administrator goals; 10% parent feedback to drive practices; and 40% administrators' observation of teacher practice.

Goals are finalized by mid-November, and reviewed in February; this is the first year an informal student survey will be used. A summative review is done at the end of the year. Forms are an important part of the evaluation and have been streamlined. Each administrator sees approximately 25 teachers in the data management system.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked if other districts in the state use this type of evaluation process. Mrs. Leffert said yes, the other districts use systems similar to this, as do most states.

Mr. Patten asked if 1st year teachers includes teachers that are new to Fairfield but not new to teaching. Mrs. Leffert said yes, they are included.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked, with so many options, how is it possible for teachers to focus on the teacher goals; and are Instructional Rounds helping to add focus? Mrs. Leffert said that it would be impossible to find evidence of all 60, but there should be evidence of each of the 4 Domains. Instructional Rounds help to add focus and link the process together. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked how administrators make time for drop-ins. Mrs. Leffert said that it is not always easy.

Ms. Karnal asked who the administrators are and whether teachers are evaluated by more than one administrator. Mrs. Leffert said principals, curriculum leaders, coordinators, and assistant principals are all administrators; typically there are 2 reviewers; usually the building administrator performs the formal observation.

Ms. Pytko asked for the length of time it takes to complete a formal observation and was told one observation takes approximately 2 and a half hours, including the pre-conference, observation, feedback protocol, and post-meeting with the teacher.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked how teacher goal setting works. Mrs. Leffert said 5% is a target set within the school-wide goal, 10% is a target from the parent survey that comes from the school climate survey, 40% area stems from a Marzano rubrics target area they would like to improve and then student learning objectives targets and 2 measurable goals; this could mean 6-8 goals for the year.

Mr Patten asked if teacher evaluations are public information and was told no.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the non-traditional positions. Mrs. Leffert said for the 40% area only, a rubric was developed for those positions.

Ms. Karnal asked if evaluations are done for long-term substitutes and was told no, but they do get feedback from administrators and teachers.

Mr. Dwyer asked for unanimous consent to move item 8 – Superintendent’s report – to just after Item 6C. The Board approved.

Approval of Redistricting Guidelines

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Guiding Principles for Redistricting as enclosed.

Mr. Patten moved, Ms. Pytko seconded to amend the motion to read, “that the Board of Education approve the Guiding Principles for Elementary School Redistricting as submitted by the Ad-Hoc Redistricting Committee, and that the Board accept these principals as the final report of the committee.”

Mr. Patten wanted to be consistent with Roberts Rules.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the intent of the motion was to discharge the subcommittee and Mr. Patten said yes.

Mrs. Kennelly made a friendly amendment to change the spelling of “principals” to “principles.” Approved by unanimous consent.

Mr. Llewellyn asked why add this motion when 6a essentially does the same thing? What if the consultant comes back with data showing 1000 fewer students next year in the district - would the committee have to be formed again?

Dr. Title said no, the consultant’s information would have to be presented to the Board and not to the committee.

Mr. Patten said Roberts Rules is vague on disbanding a committee; essentially the report acceptance ends the committee.

Mr. Dwyer said the Board could choose to move on from the committee. Mr. Patten’s amendment would be in order, if the Board wants to collapse the motions into one.

Mr. Llewellyn asked what the procedure would be if the consultant says there will be 1000 fewer students.

Mr. Dwyer said that the full Board would discuss the issue.

Amendment Passed 6-2-1

Favor: Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal

Abstain: Mr. Llewellyn

Ms. Karnal asked Mr. Patten what he meant by ‘the Board has heard enough’.

Mr. Dwyer said that was his phrase and not Mr. Patten’s.

Mr. Patten agreed, but said that he could respond anyway. After 3 meetings including a town-hall style meeting, it was clear the committee was not going to solve the overall space issue.

Mr. Dwyer said he was not a fan of looking at pocket redistricting, and the public made that clear as well; the Guiding Principles are also clear.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said the implication is that this Board or some Board members wanted redistricting, when the Board members really only wanted to make a more informed decision; the changing mandate which included taking out the ability of the committee to hire a consultant confused her. She questioned the ability to permanently define headroom capacity in the Guiding Principles and is interested to hear the consultant’s view.

Mrs. Gerber said that, per BoE bylaws, committees cannot expend any funds, and therefore can’t hire a consultant; that was why the language was removed from the committee charge.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if the consultant was recommending percentages for headroom.

Dr. Title explained that the consultant asked the committee for Guiding Principles to provide some direction, and also mentioned that 85-90% is customary headroom capacity.

Mr. Convertito further explained that the redistricting committee was charged to determine whether redistricting would more efficiently utilize assets at the elementary level. In tandem, the racial imbalance study was being done.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the Guiding Principles are in ranked order and Mr. Convertito said yes, they are in priority order.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reiterated that ‘we’ determine the headroom number; the community has made it clear the need is for Holland Hill to be a 504. She asked about the ed-specs.

Dr. Title said the plan is to have the First Reading of the ed-specs at the December 8 meeting.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to make a friendly amendment to change Guiding Principle #5 by substituting the word “targeted” for “maintained.” Approved by unanimous consent.

Mr. Llewellyn said this will give more flexibility if the district wants to make it 91%.

Ms. Karnal asked when the consultant will provide an update. Dr. Title said a draft plan needs to be complete by the January/February timeframe.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the intent was to define functional capacity and Mr. Llewellyn said no. Mr. Dwyer asked if there was any discussion by the committee on this particular word and Mr. Patten said that word was used previously. Mr. Convertito added that flexibility is inherent in the title, “Guiding Principles.”

Mr. Patten made a friendly amendment to change Guiding Principle #4 to read “portables” instead of “portable.” Approved by unanimous consent.

Mr. Dwyer said this will make 6a moot and it will not be addressed.

Public Comment:

Neal Fink, Crest Terrace: Number 6 on the Guiding Principles should be moved to number 1.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if 6 could be moved to 5b.

Mrs. Gerber asked whether the consultants will look at all 8, since they only asked for 5. Dr. Title said all 8 will be reviewed.

Original motion, as amended, Passed: 9-0

New Business

Approval to Disband the Redistricting Committee

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to postpone item 6A – approval to disband the Redistricting Committee – indefinitely.

Motion Passed: 9-0

First Quarter Financial Report

Mrs. Munsell reviewed the First Quarter Financial Report and discussed the enclosure. It is preliminary as expenditures fluctuate and school staff assignments are finalized at the beginning of the school year. A sizeable amount of contractual and/or fixed costs are not encumbered, such as utilities and maintenance.

Mr. Llewellyn asked about the additional 8 retirees. Mrs. Munsell said the total number of retirees is 22 and Dr. Title added that 14 were budgeted for. Mr. Llewellyn also asked about Effective School Solutions and whether it was the reason for the increase in Pupil Personnel Expenses; Mrs. Munsell said it was. Mr. Llewellyn asked for more detail on legal expenses; if that creates too much work then he asked if it could be added into the narrative of the report. Ms. Leonardi said that Effective School Solutions is an intense level of therapeutic assistance, allowing for early intervention and care that meets the mental health needs of students while allowing students to meet their academic needs. The preliminary data on this program is excellent. Money was moved from the out-of-district tuition line to support this. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if this program is only available at the high schools and whether PD might be provided to staff. Ms. Leonardi said it is only available at the high schools, and although she is optimistic, there is not yet enough data to move the model downward.

Mr. Patten asked if the Town has similar unforeseen charges for contributing to the pension fund and Mrs. Munsell said she didn't think so as the Town most likely caught the issue in time; the BOE budget is approved earlier.

Discussion of the 2016-2017 Program Initiatives and Budget Implications

Dr. Title said the budget is still being formulated and asked for feedback on concepts presented in the enclosure: Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Program Assessment, Middle School Music, Technology and the World Language Program. Where possible, the program improvements have been tied back to the District Improvement Plan.

Dr. Boice said World Language textbooks for levels 30 and 40 are needed to complete the purchase of World Language texts. The Social Studies textbook and resource material includes the entire range for the K-12 curriculum which had previously been purchased piecemeal. Mr. Cummings said there is a need to build upon the current instructional strengths of teachers with a greater focus on identifying and remediating dyslexia. The core and remedial materials will help the Language Arts Specialists deliver appropriate interventions for students in grades K-2.

Dr. Boice reviewed the program assessment costs for the PSAT and pre-PSAT, which allows for the collection of standardized data. The middle school music initiative includes an upgraded Music Keyboarding class, additional .4 staff, and the purchase of the Piano Suite Premier software which is used at the high school.

Mrs. Parks reviewed the technology initiative for a document camera at each school. This would support instruction by projecting student writing, documents, art work, etc. in the classroom. No screen is needed.

Mr. Cummings reviewed the World Language initiative and recommended expanding the grades 4 and 5 World Language schedule to grade 3 for 2016-2017. The cost for this initiative includes additional staff, materials and curriculum revisions for grades 3-5. Further program expansion is recommended in grades K-2 for the 2017-2018 school year.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if a screen mattered for the document camera. Mrs. Parks said it can be projected anywhere, much like an overhead projector and is not part of the interactive smartboard. Mr. Cumming said it does not need the translucence of an overhead projector.

Ms. Pytko asked if this will require PD and if any exist in the district. Mrs. Parks said they do exist and are being used, and PD is not required. The idea is to have one in each school library.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the possibility of replacing the middle school music course in the future. Dr. Boice said no; the new course will keep students in Music and will translate in to a high school course. The Music Department feels very strongly that this is the right direction. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly also asked whether the benefits of alternate programming for the 9th graders during the PSAT administration might actually outweigh the benefits of administering a pre-PSAT type test. Dr. Title said this is the balancing act and that is why it is being considered; the cost of administering the test was absorbed this year but it must be budgeted for next year. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she was disappointed to not see an elementary math text. Mr. Cummings said a committee will formed after the holiday that will recommit to the search.

Mr. Dwyer asked what the cost might be for the elementary math text. Mr. Cummings estimated \$80K per year per grade for K-2, as those texts tend to be consumables with tear-outs. In grades 3-5, a rough estimate is \$50-\$70K per grade per year. Dr. Title added that the numbers are higher now that curriculum is for grades K-12.

Mrs. Gerber asked if the new keyboarding class would require a change in curriculum and was told no. Dr. Boice said it will be offered in grades 6-8 and will allow teachers to have different levels. Mrs. Gerber asked if there is a shelf life for history books. Dr. Boice said she understood the Board to want a text for every student and the teachers need new resources.

Mr. Patten asked about the .4 Music teacher. Dr. Boice said this would be new staff. Mr. Patten asked if the initiatives presented here equate to \$1.5 million in additions and whether there might be any hopeful surprises in the budget. Dr. Title said some texts are already budgeted for, so the estimate is actually \$1.2 million, net. The biggest unknown in the budget is health insurance.

Mr. Llewellyn said he heard from some teachers that the new World Language text is exceedingly difficult; talking about social issues is difficult when you don't even know the basic words to start with. He requested a presentation to the Board of the 10 and 20 level texts before a commitment is made for the 30 and 40 level texts. He too would like to see an elementary math text. He asked if there were any other revisions to Unified Arts. Dr. Boice said an overview will be presented when the computer curriculum is presented. He asked if Study Hall was being eliminated. Dr. Boice said students should be in Music; no other time exists for Study Hall. Regarding the document camera, he requested a presentation; it sounds very similar to a projector. In relation to this, he asked if all classrooms have smart boards and Mrs. Parks said most do. She stated there is a district-wide technology committee that reviews requests; the district is committed to providing a projection system in each classroom.

Mr. Calabrese thanked the presenters. He would like a math text and supports the assessments. He also supports the middle school Music program initiative 100% but does not see a need for the document cameras. Perhaps that money could be better spent in the K-2 World Language program.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack echoed Mr. Calabrese's thoughts on technology as well as the World Language program in particular. She stressed her ongoing interest in curriculum, textbooks, and instructional development as a priority in spending, and if we could accelerate the expansion of the World Language program earlier, or accelerate the purchase of elementary math textbooks earlier she would support either of those initiatives. She wants to look for smarter ways to teach elementary world language because it's just not going to be the same as a native person or living in a different country. So the sooner we can roll it out the better for the kids. She also stated she's an advocate for music for all students, but also can't help but advocate for the minority kid who, music is just not for them. She can see both sides of the argument to the extent we could find a flexible option for those kids who just don't fit that stereotype be it even a small program. She thinks that it would be lovely for public schools to allow the flexibility and acknowledgement that we do have a diverse community with kids who maybe have diverse interests. She would love to see what the feedback is from the world language textbooks we've used and how effective they are across the board, and if we're finding that

maybe there's a question mark maybe we re-analyze. She's heard from several people now regarding the textbooks and the need for the new textbooks and having something consistent. She asked the question as to whether textbooks will be at grade level -- are we going to be buying lexiles that correspond to the grade level. Stressed geography – a hot button very close to the hearts of many of the teachers. Is concerned that a lot of kids are geography illiterate and would love to avoid kids like that coming out of Fairfield. If we could buy a textbook that supports that initiative, or maybe something supplemental, to work it in as part of the curriculum going up because that is a key part of being a world citizen. If we can start thinking more globally and look for specific textbooks that address that issue that would be wonderful. Regarding the improving instruction of phonemic awareness and fluency among teachers, and increase the presence of core and remedial instructional materials she was wondering what instructional materials are being considered – what types of instructional materials do we find to be the most valuable that we want to invest or direct or are we going to have a touch of all different types?

Mr. Dwyer asked Mrs. Liu-McCormack if all of that was what she was looking for in the budget and she said it was.

Ms. Pytko asked if the new Social Studies texts will be aligned to the new standards and Dr. Boice said yes.

Mr. Dwyer said that he would not want the staff to not consider innovative ideas based on past Board discussions and he thanked the presenters for this report.

Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Title mentioned that the CAFE Conference is coming up and CAFE awarded Fairfield Public Schools with five separate 'Excellence in Communications' awards for the budget book, district website, superintendent twitter, budget presentation and the World Language presentation.
- Fairfield has also been named to the AP Honor Roll for the third year in a row and a press release will be out soon on that. This shows that more students are taking more courses; the AP Honor Roll has criteria over a 3 year period that includes increasing participation, increasing or maintaining the number of minorities and increasing performance levels. The new AP Psychology course has opened up participation for some students.
- It has been an unprecedented year for Warde vs. Ludlowe varsity sporting events; attending these events is a great experience and he recommends it to everyone. The music events are also incredible.
- Many positive comments were received about the lockdown on October 23. Training paid off, but the district is looking to do even better. An action plan is being prepared, which may require returning for a capital request on security infrastructure. Chief MacNamara will visit PTA's and Dr. Title will give a presentation on the event to other Superintendents. Parents, students and staff all did a wonderful job.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the PTAC meeting she attended with Dr. Title and Chief MacNamara was a solid 75 minute presentation that was much appreciated and well attended.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack handed a copy of Public Act No. 15-168 to Board Members and asked, as is her wishful thinking, that the topic of a strategic school profile report be added to the next meeting under the Superintendent Report.

Mr. Dwyer said new ideas should not be presented during the Superintendent's report, but the Board may ask questions based on his report.

Dr. Title said that when the CSDE issues the report, it will be presented to the Board. This has not yet been issued.

Approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Paraprofessionals Union CSEA/SEIU Local 2001, CTW and the Fairfield Board of Education, July 1, 2013-June 30, 2016

Mr. Calabrese moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education hereby moves into Executive Session to discuss record, reports and statements of strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining in accordance with Connecticut General Statute CGS 1-210(b)(9), and invite Mrs. Leffert to attend.

Motion Passed 9-0

The Board went into Executive Session at 10:15PM.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:45PM.

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Paraprofessionals Union CSEA/SEIU Local 2001, CTW and the Fairfield Board of Education, July 1, 2013-June 30, 2016.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the October 6, 2015 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 6, 2015.

Mr. Calabrese made a friendly amendment to change the last word on page 1, just prior to the Public Comment section, from "cafeteria" to "library." Approved by unanimous consent.

Motion as Amended Passed 9-0

Approval of the Minutes of the October 20, 2015 Special Meeting

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mr. Patten seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of October 20, 2015.

Motion Passed 7-2

Favor: Mr. Patten, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly
Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Llewellyn

Committee/Liaison Reports

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly requested feedback on the BOE Handbook for the upcoming Policy Committee Meeting. Mr. Patten reported that per the Board of Health, the state cannot find a wipe product that will satisfy the wipe requirement and criteria as set forth in the Food Allergy Policy.

Open Board Comment

Mr. Llewellyn said he has received a number of calls regarding iReady, and that parents are receiving different information. He felt the results should be shared with parents and the district should provide a presentation on this. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked all Board members to be courteous and not blindside the Board or staff with topics that can be addressed in advance. Mr. Calabrese thanked everyone for being so welcoming, and said he looked forward to working with all Board members. Mrs. Gerber mentioned the Sticks for Soldiers Event will take place at FLHS on November 28, and the Girls Volleyball state playoff game takes place tomorrow at Foran High School. Mrs. Liu-McCormack hopes that everyone will take a look at the information she handed out and is looking forward to the New Year and moving forward cohesively as a Board. Her intent is to share information broadly with the Board and not to blindside. We should take a look at the statistics and she will ask if the Board will take action with some of the information she shares, for the betterment of our district and town. Mr. Dwyer mentioned the proposed BOE meeting dates that were on the table at tonight's meeting will be made official on December 8. He attended an iReady presentation that was given by a principal at a school PTA meeting and said the principal informed him it was a standard presentation developed with Central Office; the intent was to have a consistent way to deliver the information.

Adjournment

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

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:58PM

*Respectfully Submitted by
Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education
Secretary*