

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, May 21, 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 7:50PM. 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, FWHS student rep Ms. Solari, FLHS student reps Ms. Coolidge and Ms. Phillips, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 35 members of the public.

New Business

Approval of Superintendent's Recommended 2019-2020 Budget Adjustments

Mr. Aysseh moved/Mr. Dwyer seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent Recommended Budget Adjustments for 2019-20 as enclosed."

Mr. Dwyer moved/Mr. Peterson seconded to amend the motion to read, "that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent Recommended Budget Adjustments for 2019-20, represented by column 11 'alternate adjustments' as enclosed." Motion passed 9-0.

Mr. Peterson moved/Mr. Aysseh seconded to remove \$9500 for the math academy and reduce the allocation reduction of \$180,112 by \$9500, resulting in an allocation reduction of \$170,612. Motion failed 3-6 (Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly against).

Ms. Pytko moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to remove line 25 in column 11 -- \$206,006 for Chrome Books and reallocate the funds as follows:

\$15,894 to major maintenance

\$180,112 to allocation reduction

\$10,000 to athletic equipment sheds

Motion failed 3-6 (Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly against).

Original motion as amended passed 6-3 (Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Ms. Jacobsen against).

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Pytko moved/Mr. Dwyer seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the following minutes:

April 9, 2019 Special BoE Meeting

April 9, 2019 Regular BoE Meeting

April 23, 2019 Special BoE Meeting

April 30, 2019 Special BoE Meeting

May 7, 2019 Regular BoE Meeting"

Motion passed 9-0.

Adjournment

Ms. Pytko moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the BoE adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:58PM.

Detailed Minutes

Student Reports

Ms. Coolidge and Ms. Phillips reported for Fairfield Ludlowe: The National Honor Society Senior Recognition is scheduled for next Wednesday, senior internships begin Thursday; the senior prank was a slip and slide on the turf; the girls lax record is 12-4; girls tennis competes in States on Friday; The Tri-M Honors Orchestra scholarship award ceremony will take place; girls golf beat Wilton and Greenwich; yesterday was Grim Reaper day; baseball beat Warde; Junior Prom was held and a great time was had by all; FLHS Rocketry Club came in first in CT and will advance to the national competition in Virginia.

Ms. Solari reported for Fairfield Warde: AP exams days are over; the NHS induction was held; a farewell ceremony was held for visiting French exchange students; the Unified Sports spring track meet took place; several sports teams are in the midst of competing in FCIAC tournaments; Junior Prom was held in the courtyard; will soon welcome 15 educators that will be observing the block schedule and meeting with teachers; enjoyed reporting to the Board with JR and thanked the Board for allowing reports; and gave a shout-out to Mr. Ebling who will be missed next year.

Ms. Vitale thanked the students and said the Board always welcomed their perspective.

Public Comment

Colleen Phelan, Jennie Lane: Credits ECC with launching her daughter’s current success as a scholar athlete.

Jeriann Mitchell, ECC SLP: Requested the Board reject the ECC proposal and also requested the formation of a committee to explore all options.

Mary Lupo, Highlawn Road: Holland Hill cannot support 85 additional ECC students.

Sara White, Wilton Road: Supports Math Academy, both as an educator and parent.

Nicole Stanton, Burroughs Road: Supports ECC in one building; 6th graders do not need Chromebooks.

Old Business

Approval of Superintendent’s Recommended 2019-2020 Budget Adjustments

Mr. Aysseh moved, Mr. Dwyer seconded that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent Recommended Budget Adjustments for 2019-20 as enclosed.

Dr. Jones referenced the enclosure, clarifying that column 11 is the final staff recommendation. Delaying the wireless project one year allowed the allocation reduction percentage to be changed from 15 to 7.5 percent. Given this year’s givebacks, this amounts to more than what the schools received this year.

Dr. Jones responded to Board questions regarding the enclosure:

Athletic Sheds: This is the first year that athletic sheds have been requested by each high school; they will be used to store athletic equipment closer to the fields. Mr. Papageorge added that miscellaneous athletic dept. repairs are covered by maintenance funds.

WFC: The WFC \$5K reduction is attributed to a reduction in the lease renewal. Remaining funds in line 29 will provide for some improvements to the existing site including an air unit.

Math Academy: The Math Academy can move forward as approved in January. The funds provided would allow for summer curriculum work. Mr. Wakeman and Dr. Jones made the following points when responding to Board questions:

- The hiring of an additional teacher will depend on overall enrollment, as is normally done every year when section numbers are reviewed.
- Eligibility is determined by scores and current profiles of successful students. A survey of currently eligible students will determine actual enrollment. When the survey was completed for last year's students, approximately 19 were interested; if there is no demand for it, the class will not run. If that should happen, the funds would go towards additional math experiences.
- Classroom location will be determined after the Board's facility decision.
- The program will have overall similar content level with other 4th grade classes, but math will be condensed. Eligible students are split fairly evenly for boys and girls, and has roughly 70/30 ethnicity split. Similar to the Gifted Program, students will come from all over the district, and each year will have different school representation.
- It is not expected to collapse any 4th grade sections.
- Students will be on track to take Geometry in 8th grade; this is not expected to impact high school staffing.
- It is an aggressive implementation schedule; this site has to be chosen, parents need to be notified and curriculum needs to be addressed. Parents will be providing transportation.
- All math students should be challenged, regardless of participation in the Math Academy.

Mr. Dwyer supports the Math Academy as part of a comprehensive program and said it was similar to offering AP Chinese to a select group of students – it is part of a quality school district. Ms. Leeper agreed and thanked staff for all of the work; teachers cannot differentiate for every single student, and providing this opportunity lets parents decide. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly also supported the Math Academy as a budget item and said the \$9500 curriculum should be developed, regardless of whether the program is centralized. Mr. Aysseh said the funding should be applied to the centralized setting as described. Ms. Pytko was hesitant with support; the district is one of inclusion and this class is secluded.

High School FTE: Ms. Deasy reviewed the 2.8 FTE list. Mr. Hatzis added that the 9th grade Biology bubble is moving up to 10th grade Chemistry, and will require an additional .5 FTE at FLHS. Shifting students into under-enrolled courses doesn't always meet students' needs.

Chromebooks: Ms. Pytko said she would like to delay the 6th grade Chromebook roll-out for one year until more is known.

Mr. Dwyer moved, Mr. Peterson seconded to amend the motion to read, "that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent Recommended Budget Adjustments for 2019-20, represented by column 11 'alternate adjustments' as enclosed."

Motion Passed: 9-0

Mr. Peterson moved, Mr. Aysseh seconded to remove \$9500 for the Math Academy and reduce the allocation reduction of \$180,112 by \$9500, resulting in an allocation reduction of \$170,612.

Motion Failed: 3-6

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson

Oppose: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Ms. Pytko moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to remove line 25 in column 11 -- \$206,006 for Chrome Books and reallocate the funds as follows:

- \$15,894 to major maintenance;
- \$180,112 to allocation reduction;
- \$10,000 to athletic equipment sheds.

Dr. Jones noted that letters from all 3 middle school principals and from the RLMS PTA President do not support removing Chromebooks. Chromebooks allow for 21st century teaching, provide equity for all students and are essential for assessments. From an educator's standpoint, it's almost malpractice to not technologically prepare students for assessments. If Chromebooks are not supported, then more funding will be required to purchase additional carts and equipment.

Mr. Peterson said he too received the letters of support but he has a different view. 6th graders are easily distracted and use Chromebooks as a chat room during class; it would not be malpractice to wait a year and see the metrics.

Mr. Dwyer and Mr. Aysseh did not support the motion. Mr. Aysseh hoped the district could look at spyware to shut things down quickly if needed. Dr. Jones said the device is monitored 24/7, which is a good thing for kids in crisis; the district is vigilant and responsive to parents.

Mrs. Jacobsen agrees with Mr. Peterson but emphasized that she supports middle school administrators and will fight reductions.

Middle School Principals Dr. Rosato, Mr. Formato and Ms. Tiley all spoke in support of Chromebooks. Students are very responsible and take good care of them; they level the playing field; teachers are dedicated to the initiative which translates to better teaching and better scores; and teachers are changing instruction with a balanced approach – they are not always behind a Chromebook. Mr. Honohan added that entire grade deployment facilitates the learning experience, particularly when 6th graders participate in instruction with upper level grades.

Ms. Pytko says the rollout should be delayed until more research is done.

Public Comment:

Christine McMaster-Sander, TMS math teacher and RLMS parent: Supports Chromebooks; having the technology at home is seamless; 6th graders in her math class are disadvantaged by not having their own Chromebooks.

Nicky Callahan, RLMS Tech Integrator and FPS parent: Advocates for Chromebooks; consider cost of updating carts and labs if Chromebooks are not purchased.

Peggy Shore, RLMS Teacher: Curriculum is progressive and dependent on materials that are easily provided by Google suite.

Motion Failed: 3-6

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Peterson

Oppose: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Original Motion as Amended Passed: 6-3

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

Oppose: Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Ms. Jacobsen

First Reading of ECC Site for 2020

Dr. Jones reviewed that 172 ECC students are pre-enrolled for 2019-2020 and also reviewed results of the Program Rubric, projected building facility utilization, the BoE timeline, and the Program Goals for 2019-2020. The Program Goals included class sizes of 15, 50/50 peer ratios, balanced English learners at both sites, improvement to KDG transition, available seat growth and feeder pattern transitions. The BOE timeline for 2021-2022 showed one ECC site at Holland Hill and one at North Stratfield, with no ECC students remaining at the ECC Warde site. The Board had requested the district look for 2 sites to make ECC more equitable. Mr. Mancusi commented that high quality programming will be delivered at one or multiple sites.

Ms. Pytko said the ECC site is a \$2M investment and is specialized learning space perfectly designed for these children; she can't see moving it to make room for Warde. Mr. Peterson asked if the Board would consider maintaining the Warde site for itinerant students and overflow; he does understand the equity reasoning. Dr. Jones said there aren't enough itinerant students to maintain the Warde site just for those students; should the Board decide to keep the Warde site as an ECC location, staff will make it work.

Mrs. Jacobsen commented that over time, by placing all PK classrooms into K-5 schools, and including the Math Academy, approximately 20 classrooms are needed, which is equivalent to closing one elementary school. By taking ECC out of Warde, portables become a real possibility. She asked that building utilization information be provided to the Board of Selectmen. Mrs. Vitale agreed and said this is reason to advocate that Mill Hill should be a 504.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said her understanding is that the Board is committed to 2 sites, even though she and Ms. Pytko prefer one site. Ms. Vitale confirmed that Board members have not wavered, and the sense of the body is a 2-site approach.

Mrs. Maxon Kennelly asked:

- In the PK Rubric, why is the Burr site labeled as moderately disruptive? Dr. Jones said Burr has a CLC with specialized staff, which would need to be relocated. Mr. Mancusi said CLC services are offered to PK-12. The Burr CLC is comprised of students from across the district based on a specialized feeder pattern, and may also include students districted for Burr. Ms. Pytko added that moving CLC students can be disruptive for those students, as they have become part of the community.
- Please expand on site ranking for drop off and pick up times? Dr. Jones said ECC would have a slightly different drop off time so as to not affect K-5 traffic; sites built to a 504 will have sufficient parking.

Mrs. Gerber asked if the earlier start and end time at Holland Hill would be problematic. Dr. Jones said the ECC at HH and NSS sites could have the same start time.

Mr. Peterson asked about the effect of increased part time staffers such as various therapists. Dr. Jones said student need determines staffing; a 504 site can accommodate increased staff.

Mrs. Jacobsen asked for the total budget needed for any sites that are chosen. Dr. Jones said this will affect the 20-21 budget and the Board will be able to make decisions and discuss options during the budget process. One of those options could be air conditioning units that tie into the central system at NSS. Mr. Aysseh asked how that would work with mechanical means of fresh air. Mr. Papageorge said the modified split unit could be controlled from a central unit; fresh air could be brought in to the classroom via duct work.

Ms. Leeper asked if the ECC-site equity concerns are real or perceived. Dr. Jones said there will be differences regardless of whether ECC is located at Warde and 1 other site, or whether ECC moves to 2 elementary sites. The peer model is more effective at school locations. Mr. Mancusi said the Board tasked staff to look at 2 elementary sites; the continuum of services will be the same as currently delivered.

Ms. Vitale clarified that the Board will be voting to implement the timeline as proposed on page 3, phasing out Stratfield and phasing in NSS and Holland Hill. She added that the Board searched for space that would accommodate a single site, but was not successful.

First Reading of Charge to Milone and MacBroom (MM)

Mrs. Vitale noted the enclosure and said the focus of the charge to MM was overcrowding and racial imbalance.

Mr. Dwyer suggested clearly defining the last sentence on proximity and safety for MM. Policy exists that clearly defines proximity and safety. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mr. Aysseh advocated striking the final sentence, as it is redundant. Mr. Aysseh supports the charge and wants to move forward.

Mrs. Jacobsen suggested eliminating the 85% target rate for secondary schools and instead request secondary school utilization rates for each elementary scenario. Mr. Dwyer disagreed, and said 85% is the standard target. Mrs. Gerber noted that the 85% and 90% utilization rates are from the original 2010 Long-Range Facilities Plan.

Mrs. Gerber noted that the Board may require more than 2-3 scenarios, given that several members are talking total redistricting. The Board needs consensus on whether to include secondary-level scenarios.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Pytko moved, Mr. Dwyer seconded that the Board of Education approve the following minutes:

April 9, 2019 Special BoE Meeting
April 9, 2019 Regular BoE Meeting
April 23, 2019 Special BoE Meeting
April 30, 2019 Special BoE Meeting
May 7, 2019 Regular BoE Meeting”

Motion Passed: 9-0

Superintendent Report

Dr. Jones reported:

- Art shows are ongoing and the art show at Pequot library with the food trucks is on May 29.
- The Rocketry team made it to Nationals and did very well.
- The FWHS Headmaster search is underway and there is a fantastic candidate pool.

Committee/Liaison Reports

Ms. Pytko reported SEPTA will meet May 29 at 7:30 at FLHS.

Mr. Dwyer reported that he is attending the SPSBC for middle school roof and security and both are on or under budget. Security should be completed this summer and the middle school roof is ongoing.

Mrs. Gerber reported that MHBC will be presenting to the BoS for a vote tomorrow; the traffic consultant and member of the police department will be there.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reported that the Policy Committee has finalized a Homework Policy draft that is being reviewed by staff. It will be ready for a First Read on the first June agenda.

Mrs. Jacobsen said the budget bill is anticipated within a few weeks.

Mrs. Vitale reported that First Selectman Tetreau and FEA President Bob Smoler are working on a joint statement regarding teacher pensions and she invited Board members to also lend support to the letter.

Mrs. Vitale reported for Sherman BC: Lockers are planned for this summer; HVAC is planned for next summer.

Mrs. Vitale reported for PTAC: Nominations for PTAC awards are underway.

Open Board Comment

Mrs. Gerber said Ludlowe baseball won their game tonight and will be advancing to FCIAC finals vs. Staples.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the World Finals Odyssey of the Mind is taking place in Michigan.

Mrs. Vitale attended her daughter's college graduation this past weekend and thanked all her teachers, K-12.

Public Comment:

Bonnie Rotelli, Fairfield Resident: Advocated to keep the Warde ECC site and requested one scenario from MM that keeps ECC as one dedicated site.

Matt Ogurick, South Benson Road: Neighborhood schools should be maintained as an important guiding principal.

Matthew Hallock, Sommerville Street: Suggested a cargo container solution for ECC.

Jill Vergara, Fairfield Resident: Disappointed that maintaining neighborhood schools did not stay on the list. Keeping walkers should also be on the list.

Adjournment

Ms. Pytko moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that this Regular Meeting of the BoE adjourn.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:58PM

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