

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, May 5, 2016**

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

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:37PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack (arrived 7:41PM), Marc Patten, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese, Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Others present were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Ludlowe student representative Isabella Frango; Warde student representative Ashley Agrello; members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 60 members of the public.

Recognition – Connecticut Outstanding Art Educator Award

Ms. Hermsen (Art Curriculum Coordinator/Liaison), recognized Ms. Mary Lou Carlson, Fairfield Warde High School, for receiving the CT Outstanding Art Educator Award. She thanked Ms. Carlson, who has been teaching since 1966. The award honors exemplary art educators for making significant contributions to the field of art education. Ms. Carlson was thankful for the opportunity to teach and thankful that Fairfield Public Schools has been a constant partner.

Student Reports

Ms. Agrello reported for Fairfield Warde High School. The international field trips all went well; AP exams are being administered; May 14 is the Junior Prom.

Ms. Frango reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School. The spring musical, West Side Story, had an amazing turnout; the annual AP photo/art show is on display; the Consumer Science Fashion Show will take place next week.

Public Comment

Vessy Doulis, Fairfield Resident: Communication regarding textbook review, traditional math.

Presentation of the DRAFT Social Studies Curricula and Textbooks, K-12

Dr. Title said this is the first K-12 curriculum review. The scope of all the teachers working on this together paid off with a fully articulated curriculum document. Dr. Pugliese, Dr. Boice, Mr. Cummings, and Ms. Ferrara presented the curriculum. The last revision for elementary was in 2003; 2009-2010 for secondary. Since that time, new standards have been implemented – Connecticut Core (2010), College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework (2013), and the Connecticut Social Studies Framework (2015). The process included research and review, course committees, parent focus groups and feedback, consultant review, and CT Council review. The proposed documents are aligned to the CT and C3 Inquiry Standards; are composed of deep and enduring understandings, concepts, and skills; and have a direct and explicit connection to the CT Core Standards. The resource review process for grades 6-12 included initial teacher search committees, review committees, publisher presentations and community viewing and feedback. Next steps are curriculum implementation guides, research and writing expectations, common assessments, professional development and collaborative planning, inquiry and performance tasks, and implementation and evaluation. Dr. Pugliese thanked all the amazing teachers for their contributions.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack thanked the group for the presentation; it is a huge accomplishment with the implementation of the Common Core.

- ♦ Questioned the assurance of equal content delivery for grades 6-12. Americans have had a terrible reputation of being fluent in social studies discussions outside of “Entertainment Weekly.” Is concerned that different teachers might select a different country, like China or Europe, to answer a comparative question. Hope that students across the district would receive a common foundation and equal delivery. Having the same textbook gives her comfort. Dr. Pugliese said multiple sources will be used in addition to the text; students will be using a common text and curriculum documents. There will be common exams and the content itself has not changed.

- ♦ For grades K-5 – it seems more vague. These students are little, she sees them as a blank slate and thinks we could populate them with facts. Will facts or views on content be the focus? Mr. Cummings said the intent at the elementary level is to challenge students with the expectation that the answers will be grounded in fact.
- ♦ Will historical facts and geography be imported as part of elementary curriculum? What content are we populating students with, since basically they know nothing of history. Doesn't see specificity. Mr. Cummings said the pursuit of fact to support reasoning and thinking skills will be the work; there must be discretion in the delivery of fact; teaching students to recognize fact from opinion. The work is to determine areas of focus at each grade level. We want to pursue deep inquiries into the social studies content no matter the grade level.
- ♦ The specificity of content in K-5 has not been defined like it has in grades 6-12? Mr. Cummings said elementary units will be supplemented with highly engaging non-fiction trade books, maps and globes.

Mr. Patten thanked the group for the tremendous effort in the first K-12 curricula.

- ♦ What is the anticipated transition for grades 6 and 7 and the combined World Regional Studies? Dr. Pugliese said there will be a revised unit for the first year; 7th graders will not miss out on geography.
- ♦ Are the AP texts used at universities? Dr. Pugliese said no, the AP texts are AP editions of college books with content created for high school, as dictated by College Board.
- ♦ Was there a lot of discussion regarding the elementary to middle school transition? Dr. Pugliese said the content and progression was mapped out. Ms. Ferrara added that the elementary parents expressed a great interest in the secondary content.

Mr. Calabrese thanked the group for all the hard work and noted that a change was clearly overdue; he was also happy to see the C3 framework connection and the added courses. Will this be alternating with science at the elementary level, how does this work? Ms. Ferrara said social studies and science do sometimes get bumped; topics will be met by trimester in order to assure that they are covered. Mr. Cummings said the current arrangement has Science and Social Studies alternating; the Language Arts reading period will be used to build connections across the curriculum.

Mrs. Pytko commended the group for the all that work that was done and for ensuring there are assessments that speak to different types of learners.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly thanked the group for the wonderful presentation.

- ♦ Is there a skills matrix? Dr. Pugliese said it is in the works.
- ♦ What formed the decision to go before the year 1898 for US History, as the state recommends? Dr. Pugliese said it didn't seem right to exclude historical references before that time; the state consultant liked the chrono-thematic approach, and other districts will probably do the same.
- ♦ Was AP Psychology changed to a semester course and what is the nature of the PD this summer? Dr. Pugliese said AP Psychology was not changed to a semester course. The PD will include English/Language Arts and Library Media and he expects to include others.

Mr. Dwyer asked if there was enough money and time for PD and implementation guides; will this curricula create more engaged young adults? Dr. Pugliese said they could always use more money for PD; summer work is critical. This falls in with training teachers for the new AP courses, conferences and inquiry. The purpose of the standards in the last dimension, is to have a product at the end, such as a letter to a congressman or local official.

Mrs. Gerber thanked the group – is there a sense of how many students will take the new courses? Dr. Pugliese said it is an amazing first year with 3 sections of Comparative Government, 6 or 7 sections of Sociology, and one section at each high school for Contemporary History; there is high interest.

<i>New Business</i>

Approval of the Plans and Specifications for the FWMS Roof Replacement Project TMP 051-KGFG

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Calabrese seconded “that the Board of Education approve the plans and specifications for the Fairfield Woods Middle School Roof Replacement Project TMP 051-KGFG as enclosed”

Mr. Morabito and Mr. Cullen said the roof was last replaced in 1991; the warranty expired last year and now qualifies for state reimbursement.

Mr. Dwyer said funding has already been approved, and this approval is another step required by the state.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if the roof will be multi-ply and was told yes.

Mr. Patten asked if anything had changed. Mr. Cullen said the good news is that the asbestos abatement study came back negative.

Mrs. Gerber asked if the SPSBC was the building committee involved and Mr. Morabito said yes.

Motion Passed: 9-0

First Reading of Policies

- ♦ *Policy 5131.7 – Students – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments*
- ♦ *Policy 5114 – Students – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said this is all part of the CABE audit; some of the wording was pulled out in 5131 and language from the state statute was added to ensure policy compliance. This is about making sure that policies are consistent; the committee did not look at the content.

Mr. Dwyer asked if CABE provided templates for these policies. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said yes for 5131, but not for 5114, that was our previously numbered policy 5119.

Mr. Patten asked if the last paragraph in 5131 came from CABE or the state. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said it was originally in our own policy 5119. Dr. Title added that this is a legal distinction with respect to conduct that is expellable on or off school property. Mr. Patten asked if policy 5119 has a new expulsion definition regarding more than 10 days out of school? Dr. Title said that has always been the definition; the language changes were for the PK-2 out-of-school suspensions.

Mr. Llewellyn wanted to clarify the school's jurisdiction, what if a child owns a BB gun, is that expellable? Dr. Title said the intent is for the mandated policy language to be consistent with the existing policy; further discussion on content can be addressed by the policy committee.

Superintendent Budget Adjustments

Dr. Title said this has been a confusing budget year. The RTM approved the budget that was recommended to them by the BOF. Regardless of what happens at the state level with regards to revenue to the Town, we need to bring our budget into compliance with the appropriated amount. It is up to the Board to decide where adjustments can be made; however it is in the Board's interest to follow the Town bodies' recommendations at this time, particularly with respect to health insurance. The enclosure details the final appropriated budget amount of \$163,658,561 with the adjustments being supplemental teachers, health insurance, and special education. If teachers are needed, they will be hired so as to remain within the district guidelines. Health insurance is a changing landscape; the most recent experience is positive. As a result of the state's Excess Cost Grant reduction, the First Selectman added \$250K back in, and that is also reflected.

Mr. Dwyer said the BOF also supported the cut to the supplemental teachers.

Mr. Llewellyn

- ♦ Could you address the cuts from Hartford? Dr. Title said that if revenue to the Town is decreased, we will examine our budget and work with the Town. We need to see what the state does and what the BOF does with the mill rate.
- ♦ Why did the "potential claims and fees" line in the medical retention sheet drop from \$500K to \$250K? Dr. Title said that was done to add the \$250K from the BOF back in.
- ♦ What is AON's role going forward? Dr. Title said this is to be determined and Mr. Mayer is handling; AON is expected to be substantially involved the first year.
- ♦ Will retirees also be on the state plan, and what is the blended rate for actives and retirees? Dr. Title said retirees will be on the state plan; AON has the expertise to determine the blended rate.

Mr. Dwyer said the RTM unanimously supported the spending plan. We are in charge of our budget, but it is in our best interest to work with the Town and he hopes for a shared ratio among the mill rate, the Town, and the BOE.

First Reading of Elementary Math Textbook

Dr. Title said this item has been a priority for the Board. Regardless of what happens in Hartford, resources will exist to purchase this text.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked what was so compelling about Bridges, 2nd edition since it is new and un-tested? Wanted to understand why Bridges was chosen over other options. When she goes online and sees things about Bridges she is concerned about the history of their old edition. What about sequencing. Why are we investing in something that's not tried and true, why not have other districts try it out. Mr. Wakeman said focus coherence and rigor. The committee reviewed many texts by speaking with other districts, using surveys and taking advantage of outside reviews. Page 2 of the enclosure outlines the strengths and needs that guided the committee. Bridges' problem solving was contextual; Singapore's was word-based.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the nature and timing of the accompanying Professional Development (PD). She understood that Madison had it for 5 years and raved about it and was told that the success was due in large part to the PD. She appreciated seeing the strengths and needs outlined clearly. Mr. Wakeman said PD is offered as part of the package; there is a tremendous amount of PD that has already been received in this process; the PD schedule is in the works. Much of the PD is in the shift to the Common Core and mathematics practices procedurally and conceptually. Mr. Cummings added that the challenge in math is to use the resource to address weaknesses and to also ensure that strengths remain strengths; the text is not the curriculum.

Mr. Patten is thrilled with the textbook and asked if there is an online component. Mr. Wakeman said yes, and the workbook can be taken home; additional resources can also be taken home and used in the classroom. Mr. Cummings said the district is looking for ways to further improve communication to parents regarding student progress. Mr. Patten asked if workbooks were common and if this is an ongoing expense. Mr. Wakeman said workbooks are common for K-5. Dr. Title said it will be an ongoing expense.

Mr. Llewellyn asked about the cost. Mr. Wakeman confirmed that it is a workbook and the estimate was recently received. Dr. Title said \$550K is allocated. Mr. Llewellyn felt that parents were brought into the process late. How did Madison measure success? How will this be blended into the curriculum? Mr. Wakeman said Madison had shown success with SBA scores. Members of the committee visited K-4 classrooms in Madison and reviewed implementation processes. Resources address all the standards; Bridges is a resource that can be used for differentiation and intervention. PD will review sequencing and integration. Mr. Llewellyn expressed concern about committing to a book for the next several years without trend information to support it; he asked Dr. Title for the historical information that he requested and for a presentation on the analysis.

First Reading of World Language Textbooks

Dr. Title said the recommendations are listed in the enclosure and the Board is welcome to ask questions.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked if the recommended books are consistent with the middle school series and was told yes. She is thankful for a better program, but is not convinced that the new methodology is the best way to teach new learners. It is not possible to do immersion here unless we start teaching like they do in Florida, where the gym teachers give commands in Spanish. Still needs to be convinced that this is better; knows some people have already convinced themselves which is fine.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the March 31, 2016 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the March 31, 2016 Special Meeting.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval of the Minutes of the April 5, 2016 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Calabrese seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the April 5, 2016 Regular Meeting.

Motion Passed: 6-3

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

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Approval of the Minutes of the April 19, 2016 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the April 19, 2016 Special Meeting.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval of the Minutes of the April 20, 2016 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Calabrese seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the April 20, 2016 Special Meeting.

Motion Passed: 9-0

<i>Superintendent Report</i>

2013-2014 School Profile and Performance Reports

Dr. Title said the link to the state reports is provided on the website. The data is from 2013-2014.

Mr. Dwyer added that each school has 3 or 4 pages of data and questions can be forwarded to Dr. Title.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if any data points were noticeable, in terms of the District Improvement Plan. Dr. Title said nothing jumped out from the district's perspective, but it is a retrospective look.

Quarterly Financial Report

Mrs. Munsell reviewed the 3rd Quarter Financial Report and expects the 2015-2016 fiscal year expenses to be within budget at year-end. The mild winter provided some savings, and savings were also experienced in transportation and magnet school tuition.

Mr. Llewellyn asked about the 401a in Fixed Charges; who manages this? Mrs. Munsell said this is reflected in the pension line and can be further broken out. The 401a is paid as incurred; it just started last year. Mr. Dwyer said this is for new employees and was only recently negotiated. Mrs. Munsell added that it is a function of turnover, there is no way to predict the number of new hires; the 401a is separate from the Town and she manages it.

Racial Imbalance Update

Dr. Title updated the Board on the recent meeting with the state. The state was amenable to allowing more time to arrive at a short-term solution and requested a plan by December. This plan must be Board-approved and should be addressed in the fall as there will be budget implications. Mr. Dwyer added that the state appreciated the proactive hiring of the consultants. This will be a discussion item for the October meeting.

Committee/Liaison Reports

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said that the annual PTAC awards ceremony will take place on June 1 and nominations are due by May 13. The Deanna O’Kiernan and Alis B. McGrath awards are for volunteers and the Brian Fagan Grant is awarded to a teacher currently enrolled in a graduate program.

Mrs. Gerber reported that the BOF has postponed the vote on the funding request for the FLHS windows project. The earliest the RTM will hear the request is now June and this may result in additional costs.

Mr. Dwyer said the Holland Hill Building Committee is moving ahead rapidly and is on schedule.

Open Board Comment

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said the superintendent search forums have gone very well. She heard positive feedback that they have been conducted in an even manner; people are happy with the selection.

Mr. Dwyer added that citizen participation in the survey has been much better than expected.

Mrs. Gerber acknowledged Mr. Hatzis for receiving the CT PTA Headmaster of the Year Award. Other notable wins included Warde’s PTA Increased Membership Award and Mill Hill’s School of Distinction Award. Additionally, the student scholarship winner was from Warde.

Adjournment

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

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:30PM

*Respectfully Submitted by
Jessica Gerber
Board of Education
Secretary*