

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, October 10, 2017**

**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 7:31PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack (arrived 7:33PM), Marc Patten (arrived 7:42PM), Donna Karnal (arrived 7:40PM), Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Trisha Pytko, Nick Aysseh, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, members of the central office leadership team, FLHS student reps Molly Baker and Isabella Schichter, FWHS student reps Ted Orben and Paul Rivera, and approximately 25 members of the public.

*Student Reports*

Ms. Baker and Ms. Schichter reported for FLHS: AP Govt. students coordinated a visit from Congressman Himes; the GIVE campaign is continuing; will host US Attorney for CT, Deirdre Daly, on October 19 and 20; students will attend BOE candidate forum; PSAT day for juniors and sophomores will take place while the freshmen attend a seminar on bullying; the music department held a simultaneous concert for all ensembles; the RAAFT club visited the Center for Family Justice to learn more about what the center offers families that are affected by domestic violence.

Mr. Orben and Mr. Rivera reported for FWHS: School spirit dress up days so far have included decades day, occupation day and TV/movie day; pink shirts are being sold on behalf of breast cancer awareness; many college representatives are visiting; athletic team participation has increased, as has attendance at games; Homecoming is this Saturday; the Learning Commons now has a recording studio; tennis courts are being reconstructed; solar panels were installed; looking forward to pep rally on Friday; PSATs will be administered to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly:

- Did Warde students attend the assembly with Jim Himes? The students said the assembly included Warde as well as schools outside of Fairfield such as Trumbull and Weston.
- Was there opportunity for students to have a dialogue? The students said yes, it was a forum.
- Mentioned that she will be asking for ideas on how to improve the post-graduate survey participation rate.
- Any sports updates? FWHS students said girls' soccer is doing well, boys' soccer has tied 4 games, the football team is having a very successful season thus far, cross country is doing well.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack: What types of questions did students ask at the Jim Himes assembly? The FLHS students said there were questions on DACA and Title IX.

Mr. Dwyer asked the students to feel free to share student perspectives on agenda items during Student Reports.

*Old Business*

*Adoption of Policy 5113, Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education adopt Policy 5113, Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*New Business*

*District Improvement Plan – Annual Update*

Dr. Jones reviewed the 'Progress to Date' and highlighted:

1. Due to budget constraints, the district wasn't able to accomplish what was hoped with elementary World Language. This will be reviewed again this year.

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2. Much work was done with Social Studies curriculum; Dr. Pugliese has been working with all levels, K-12; a direct benefit of the administrative realignment.
3. Successful transition programming work, including ECC, involved greater communication and cross-level teacher visits.
4. The HS Academic Expectations Rubric is a living document; staff continually reviews. The Capstone concept has been renamed Mastery-Based Assessment and graduation requirements have become more flexible with this – considering a number of things such as a project or a course.
5. Complimented Walter Fitzgerald staff for project-based learning work and transition to Chromebooks.
6. Hiring protocol is working well.
7. Expanded and enhanced mental health components. Currently reviewing Effective School Solutions data (for effectiveness) and staff is also participating in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy training.
8. Complimented Central Office staff with automation efforts and paperless workflow implementation.
9. The Racial Imbalance Plan is currently being reviewed by CSDE's technical assistance department.
10. Residency requirements have been tightened; considering next steps, including residency re-checks.

In reviewing the data charts, Dr. Jones highlighted the following, and noted that missing data will be addressed at the November meeting:

1. FWHS alumni survey data is valid; FLHS alumni survey data is invalid due to incorrect distribution.
2. Career and Tech-education enrollment has remained flat.
3. SAT scores remain strong.
4. Extra-curricular participation is an important area that the district is unable to compile electronically. This had previously been calculated by hand, raising questions of accuracy. Will work on getting accurate data for this measure.
5. The Physical Fitness Assessment shows strong scores.

When reviewing AP assessment charts, Dr. Jones recommended paying close attention to the percentage of students taking the assessment. Additional detail will be provided in November.

### Mrs. Liu-McCormack:

- In Calculus AB – why the drop in a '5' test score from 2012 to 2017? Why the same trend in Calculus BC? Dr. Jones said the enrollment was not that different, but some students are choosing to not take the test. Open enrollment may also be a factor.
- Science shows a similar trend – is this what was expected? Dr. Jones said the goal is for all students to feel comfortable; we should be celebrating some of these numbers – the performance is strong.

### Ms. Karnal:

- What does the Math SAT percentage on page 20 represent? Why is the target number set so much higher? Dr. Jones said she will look into the SAT percentage and believed the target numbers were set to reflect what the Board expected.
- On page 13, what was successfully utilized in the hiring process? Would like a breakdown of the process. Dr. Jones said Mrs. Leffert worked on this and she will follow up. Administrators have been more consistent in hiring and there is collaborative support.
- What is being done to work with teachers and substitutes? Dr. Jones referenced 17-19 on page 13 – supports are in place for teachers and administrators. Directors perform observations and give great feedback. There is no magic bullet for substitutes; it may be difficult to find a substitute for a high-level content class such as Physics.
- Can the substitute issue be included in the DIP? Mr. Dwyer said DIP changes can be discussed in November.
- Are new teachers mentored and observed and is it logged? Dr. Jones said yes.

Ms. Pytko:

- How does Naviance work with the middle school advisory program? Dr. Jones will follow up.
- Page 23 - Questioned the recommendation to do away with formative assessments as part of DIP reporting. How will this affect recommendation #4? Dr. Jones said performance – based assessments contain powerful data, but including them in the DIP takes staff time away from the classroom. Teachers use multiple data points within their school that do not need to be reported at the Board level.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly:

- Asked about incorporating the Capstone into the schedule and the timeline for new graduation requirements. Dr. Jones said the state has yet to define Capstone; could be a project or course. Mr. Cummings added that new graduation requirements will affect the class of 2023 – today's current 7<sup>th</sup> graders. The state has removed the specific reference to Capstone and it essentially becomes a list of experiential learning items.
- When will Fairfield begin work on graduation requirements? Mr. Cummings hopes to have a proposal to the Board by the end of the year.

Mr. Dwyer requested a November update on Fairfield's idea of Capstone, even if the state hasn't defined it.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly:

- Who heads up ELL and what work does this entail? Mr. Cummings said he, Ms. Miner, Ms. Khairallah and Mr. Chiappetta lead this work.
- Endorses elimination of minis for the non-AP Science courses.
- Why no outside-tuition students for WFC? Dr. Jones said there is no recruitment effort. She will be meeting with area Superintendents to discuss this item as well as other types of resource-sharing possibilities.
- Are Instructional Rounds only for administrators? Dr. Jones said each school operates differently in this area; district administrators are doing walk-throughs at various schools.
- What is the value of a high school principal doing a walk-through in an elementary? Dr. Jones said it has been valuable for administrators to see the vertical alignment; helps with PD development and administrator growth.
- Are the simplified School Improvement Plans complete and on the school websites? Dr. Jones said they are not all complete.
- #23 on page 14 – What level of PD is given to staff regarding STAR results? Mr. Cummings said SRBI has increased the use and understanding of STAR, but this is a continual process. The district has received training, the real work is defining how to react to the results.
- Would like the College Board reports broken down by high school.

Mr. Llewellyn:

- On page 16, #29 – What questions are the state addressing and what is the status of the Milone and MacBroom report? Dr. Jones said the state is reviewing calculations; the Milone and MacBroom presentation will take place on October 24.
- Electronic extra-curricular roster/sign-up should provide DIP data. Dr. Jones said this is not easily deciphered at this time – would like to work on getting the process automated.
- Believes CPM and group-based Math were introduced in 2012; the Calculus AB/BC Math trend may be a result of a change in teaching methodology.

Mr. Patten:

- Requested a list of 'teaching in the block' PD taken by teachers.
- Any issues with completing Science and Math curricula in the Block schedule? Dr. Jones said she has not heard one complaint; things must be going very well.
- When do workshops occur? Dr. Jones said PD can happen any time – Tuesdays and early releases are commonly used for PD, but it can also be an informal classroom observation.
- Is there a report on any teacher issues with the new schedule? Dr. Jones said she could administer a survey on this topic.

Mr. Dwyer: Felt the DIP tracked too much data and will consider this during its revision.

## *First Reading of Calendar, 2018-2019*

Mr. Dwyer noted that the calendar was recently revised to include the observed Veterans Day as a holiday for staff and students.

Dr. Jones said this is similar to past calendars. Tried to strategically place early dismissals. The February 15 day was requested by staff and could be a morale booster.

Ms. Pytko said 3 early dismissals in a row in October and March is an inconvenience for parents and staff.

Mrs. Gerber questioned the early dismissal just prior to Memorial Day and the high school early dismissals in October. Understands the PSAT early dismissal but not the other 2 that are scheduled for the same dates as elementary/middle conference days. Dr. Jones said the high schools will be undergoing a NEASC review and could use those extra days.

Mr. Aysseh agrees with Ms. Pytko and Mrs. Gerber. Three early release days in a row is a burden on families. Would rather see the May 28 PD day moved to May 24. Dr. Jones said May 24 may be a make-up test day for AP.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly is not in favor of high school early release on October 11 and 12. Is also against early release on May 24. Questioned the number of snow days adding to the school year. Could possibly have an early release on SAT day. Mr. Ebling confirmed that there is typically no early release day for SAT day – only 11<sup>th</sup> graders take that test; when they are finished, the students return to class.

Ms. Pytko: Does this calendar align with the regional CES calendar? Dr. Jones said no, otherwise there would be school on the observed Veterans Day.

Mr. Dwyer asked all Board members to submit calendar proposals in advance of the next meeting; if revised, a new calendar will be distributed.

Mrs. Gerber requested that staff investigate switching the May 28 PD to May 24.

Mr. Patten: What is the reason for the May PD? Dr. Jones said that last year's June 6 PD was well received. It was productive as a reflective time after high stakes testing completion.

## *Budget Challenges*

Mr. Dwyer asked Board members to comment on their own budget ideas.

Mr. Patten thanked Dr. Jones for doing more PD with little to no cost to the district.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly:

- Science is a priority; summer support should be there.
- Requests an analysis of the efficiencies that resulted from central office changes.
- Investigate content-specific PD – could possibly collaborate with other districts.
- Would like to understand more about the direction of the World Language program.

Dr. Jones said this will be a difficult budget year with many challenges; \$2.3M is still frozen. The budget prep manual will be distributed to the Board.

*Approval of Minutes*

## *Approval of Regular Minutes of September 26, 2017*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 26, 2017.

### **Motion Passed: 7-2**

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

Opposed: Mrs. Liu-McCormack and Mr. Llewellyn

*Superintendent Report*

Dr. Jones congratulated Osborn Hill for a great Diversity Week. The PTA was very instrumental in setting this up and it was well done. This is Pink-Out week and there are many activities across the district. The TMS gym is opening this week and the turf field will be ready very soon. Thanked all at TMS for their patience as this work was completed. The Sherman field is currently closed while DPW enhances it in time for spring. The walk-arounds have been wonderful; thanked the many teachers that opened their doors to show the great work that is happening.

*Liaison Reports*

Ms. Pytko reported for SEPTA, the next meeting is October 25<sup>th</sup>; YMCA representatives will speak about Special Olympics. The November 29 SEPTA meeting will feature Rehab Associates. The SEPTA teen social group will meet on October 27. The STORM Hockey program at Wonderland of Ice is geared towards children with developmental disabilities.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reported for the PTAC. Over \$30K in grant money is available for PTA's.

Mrs. Gerber reported that the FLHSBC is meeting tomorrow. Believes a custodian negotiation settlement will be arrived at soon.

Mr. Patten reported that the Board of Health Meeting will take place next Monday at Town Hall.

Mr. Dwyer reported that that the first Adhoc Committee on Operational Effectiveness meeting will take place on October 12. Reiterated that committee membership will be data driven without hidden agendas. The committee will present recommendations to the BOE. Hoped that membership would be fashioned quicker; hopes to get full membership list on Thursday.

Mr. Aysseh: How many members so far and is there an agenda? Will there be an orientation?

Mr. Dwyer said there will be approximately 12 members and the agenda will be posted. The first meeting will include the orientation.

*Open Board Comment*

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said that since she may not be able to attend the October 24 meeting she wanted to remark on her 4-year term. She believes the ship is in good hands with Dr. Jones. Thanked voters and fellow Board members.

*Public Comment*

Mr. Smoler, FEA President: The volume of DIP data collection does impact instruction. Requested that time between January and April be maintained. Check whether half-days impact odd/even schedule.

Dabney Bowen, Verna Hill Road: Keep half days on Fridays for family travel.

Christine Vitale, Verna Hill Road: Concerned with half days and the odd/even schedule. SEPTA funding is available for diversity programs

*Adjournment*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Karnal seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

Meeting adjourned at 9:25PM

*Respectfully submitted by:*  
*Jessica Gerber*  
*Fairfield Board of Education*  
*Secretary*