

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, April 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 Special Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call*

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:35PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, Marc Patten, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese (arrived 7:37PM), 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 100 members of the public.

*Student Athlete Recognition: Winter State Champions*

Immediately following the pledge, the Board recognized *Individual* State Champions in Fencing, Wrestling, and Indoor Track; and *Team* State Champions in Cheerleading, Dance, Bowling, Boys Ice Hockey, and Girls Ski Team. Athletic Directors Mr. Schulz and Mr. Fry introduced the students and coaches to the Board. Dr. Title and the Board congratulated the students on their achievements.

*Student Reports*

Mr. Nene and Ms. Frango reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School: AP exams have been scheduled; West Side Story is the spring musical; internships begin in 4 weeks; and international field trips depart this week.

Ms. Agrello and Ms. Shuster reported for Fairfield Warde High School: The battle of the Houses had a lot of enthusiastic participation; more than 400 students participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade dance; the solar project should be completed by the end of April; teachers are busy entering grades in IC; ACT's take place this weekend; the Chinese club is travelling to China over Spring Break; some students from Rio Vista California have been shadowing Warde students.

*Public Comment*

None.

*Presentations*

*Math Status Update*

Curriculum Leaders Dr. Rasmussen and Mr. Wakeman, RLMS Principal Ms. Tiley, Sherman Principal Ms. Roxbee, math teachers Ms. Barba and Ms. Meehan, and third grade teacher Ms. Robb, presented the Math Status Update.

The group reviewed the math curriculum including implementation, pacing, evidence of growth and achievement, and next steps. Connecticut's Core standards were adopted in 2010 which included more rigorous math standards and practices. The most recent math curriculum implementation dates are: Grades PK-2, fall 2013; Grades 3-5, fall 2012; Grades 6-8, fall 2013; and Alg. 2 and Electives, fall 2014. SBAC data supports the improvement strategies; I-Ready illustrates growth overall by strand; an increased number of students have been placed into higher levels of mathematics; there are positive signs of high school data. Next steps include the review of elementary and Algebra-2 textbooks, and professional development to address the achievement gap and support the District Improvement Plan.

Significant changes in the curriculum give students flexibility in thinking mathematically. Implementation guides help to focus on types of questions to ask. Teachers are no longer just teaching the page, but using strategies and high-level vocabulary. Students are working together and there is an emphasis on the workshop model. Links to Khan Academy are also used, which can be helpful for missed work. Excellent teacher communication ensures the sharing of instructional practice, and data team meetings assist with data point review. A key exercise in Math Instructional Rounds took place in 2015. Due to teacher feedback, some adjustments to the implementation guides have been made since the implementation.

Dr. Title added that the new curriculum is a result of the implementation of the Common Core.

Mr. Dwyer thanked the presenters.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said this was a very good presentation and she was glad to see the progress in the transition to Pre-Algebra and Pre-Algebra; she hopes the progress continues. What strategies are we using in the classroom to ensure we are not teaching to the middle? How do students access the higher level content so that they do well on assessments, particularly for going straight to Pre-Algebra, if the pace of the curriculum is not accelerated? Ms. Meehan said teachers effectively allow differentiation by moving around the room as students are working together. Math/Science teachers and MRTs help. Mr. Wakeman said the implementation guides are not about discreet skills; when students show preparedness for accelerated content, teachers respond. Mrs. Liu-McCormack mentioned the two-step phase of testing and wondered if for some of the little things there could be an earlier introduction -- ways to build in a little bit of acceleration for students.

Mr. Patten thanked the staff for all of the hard work. He was thrilled to see the transition numbers.

1. Is the Math Rounds process the same for all the middle schools? Dr. Rasmussen said the Math Rounds encompassed 10 schools in one day and was a large endeavor.
2. In terms of some of the changes, can you explain what replaced items that were moved?  
The curriculum still addresses standards, but some items are now addressed earlier in the year, and then revisited later, resulting in a better alignment. Due to teacher feedback, additional emphasis was needed for practice on fractions and decimals in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Ms. Karnal thanked the staff for the presentation.

1. Why do the statistics show weakening results moving from grades 3 to 8 on pages 8 and 9? Mr. Wakeman said that younger students have been involved in this curriculum longer. It is a significant shift for teachers as well as students in the upper grades. Grade 3 was implemented in the fall of 2012.
2. For the PSATs, it seems only the accelerated students will be fully prepared? Dr. Rasmussen said students performing at grade level will be prepared to take the PSAT; benchmarks are higher as students access more content. College Board was brought in for professional development (PD) to help learn about this assessment; additional PD is being considered to analyze PSAT data.
3. What number of students took AP tests? Dr. Rasmussen said not all AP students take the AP exams.
4. Regarding next steps – SATs, looking at a new book – can you also add PSATs? Dr. Rasmussen said yes.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly thanked the presenters. She feels content knowledge is very important.

1. Will PD address instructional practice or content knowledge and development? Concerned with concept of “robo teaching”. Asked about the nature of working with John Keough. Ms. Meehan said PD with Keough was mostly on content. Teachers also worked on the developmental continuum based on content as well as the instructional model. Ms. Roxbee said there is constant PD with math and science teachers reviewing student work. Ms. Robb added that she does not use the implementation guide as a script; she feels comfortable departing from it depending on the needs of her students.
2. For PSAT and SAT, can we get domain information? Dr. Rasmussen said sub-strand data is not provided and he is not sure when or if College Board will provide this data.
3. How much data sharing is occurring between schools in terms of 5<sup>th</sup> grade assessment for accelerated placement, and is this data being monitored? Mr. Wakeman said there is not a consistent pattern in terms of one school having more acceleration than others, but an overall increase in accelerated placements is occurring.
4. How do you see keeping IReady data relevant? Mr. Wakeman said IReady and STAR are used as screening tools and are used differently than CMT and SBAC data. IReady and STAR are used for domain data and student-progress data; it usually shows what teachers already know about students, but occasionally may show that more evaluation is needed.
5. Has a concern that some students may be using tricks rather than learning the algorithm. Ms. Meehan said the algorithm is taught. Ms. Robb said the work that is done beforehand ensures the understanding of the algorithm.

6. How is the new high school block schedule working, will curriculum need to be adjusted? Ms. Barba said it is working well – the extra time allows for deeper learning.

Mr. Llewellyn expressed concern with some of the results; elementary program has been in place for some time; secondary for a while as well, and yet he is unable to see a trend in some places.

1. Any insight into what might be causing the downward trends starting on page 8? Is not seeing good trends in MS. Dr. Rasmussen said there was a massive change in curriculum, especially in grades 7 and 8. We put in supports and worked with teachers to ensure students are more prepared for high school. Mr. Llewellyn said from what he's hearing from students there's more of a focus on conceptual.
2. Can you share IReady scores from last spring and this fall so the Board can see a trend? Are you aware of how many students are being tutored? Has the pendulum swung too far away from the basics? Can you address why student AP scores of 4 and 5 appear to be dropping? Dr. Rasmussen said more students are being encouraged to take AP courses and supports are provided to ensure students are successful. Basic skills are stressed very heavily and fluency assessments are given three times a year. Students should be fluent quickly and accurately. He will work with Dr. Title to provide scores as requested.
3. Can you compare metrics for DRG A and B for all of the metrics provided? Who is on the textbook committee? Mr. Wakeman said there are 37 people on the textbook review committee and parents will be invited to participate once the resources are narrowed down.

Mr. Llewellyn asked that the rules be suspended and the public be allowed to comment on the presentation.

Mr. Dwyer said the By-laws allow for public comment at the beginning of the meeting.

Mrs. Gerber thanked all the teachers for all the hard work that has been done and thinks that, while there's always room for improvement, the program is excellent.

<i>Old Business</i>
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*Approval of the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) Survey*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Patten seconded that the Board of Education approve the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) Survey.

*Public Comment:*

Reini Knorr, FWHS PTA: Supports survey.

Wendy Bentivegna, Village Lane: Stressed importance of survey data.

Cristin McCarthy-Vahey, State Representative: The survey is critical for the Community Coalition Fairfield Cares.

Mr. Llewellyn supports the survey and wants to ensure the district is proactive with the parental consent letter.

Mr. Dwyer said the opt-out letter will be clear to students and parents as was addressed at the previous meeting.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Approval of the Middle School Computers Curriculum*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Middle School Computers Curriculum.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Approval of Deleting Policies:*

***Delete Policy 1410 – Activities Involving Relations Between Public and Students – Directory Information (Community Relations)***

Approved May 5, 2016

Identical to Policy 5541 – Directory Information (students)

**Delete Policy 5127 – Attendance – Migrant Students (Students)**

Identical to Policy 6550 – Migrant Students (Instruction)

**Delete Policy 1145 – Communications with the Public – Website and Homepage Development (Community Relations)**

Identical to Policy 6416 – Website and Homepage Development (Instruction)

**Delete Policy 1140 -- Communications with the Public – Printed Material to Take Home (Community Relations)**

Identical to Policy 6555 – Printed Material for Students to Take Home (Instruction)

**Delete Policy 1470 – Activities Involving Relations Between Public and Students – Surveys of Students (Community Relations)**

Identical to Policy 6421 – Surveys of Students (Instruction)

**Delete Policy 0120 – Equivalence of Resources Among the Schools (Mission, Goals, Objectives)**

Identical to Policy 6213 – Equivalence of Resources Among the Schools (Instruction)

**Delete Policy 5550 -- Welfare– Equivalence of Resources Among the Schools (Students)**

Identical to Policy 6213 – Equivalence of Resources Among the Schools (Instruction)

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the deletion of Policies 1410, 5127, 1145, 1140, 1470, 0120 and 5550.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Adoption of Policy 5125.11 – Students, Health – Medical Records*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Ms. Karnal seconded that the Board of Education adopt Policy 5125.11 – Students, Health – Medical Records.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

<i>New Business</i>
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*Appointment of Superintendent Search Firm*

Mr. Calabrese moved, Mr. Patten seconded that the Board of Education appoint Hazard, Young and 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 March 7, 2016.

Mrs. Liu McCormack clarified that this is the revised and recently received letter and that Ms. Karnal would also be reviewing the final contract.

Mr. Dwyer said that the Board had already agreed that the most recent version of the letter is the one that's being referenced, and said that, as he had already stated earlier, he would consult with Ms. Karnal on the contract. Amended language is not needed. Six proposals were received and the Board settled on HYA over 2 or 3 sessions.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Establish Date and Time of Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School Graduation*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education establish June 16, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time of graduation for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and Fairfield Warde High School.

Ms. Pytko asked why both high schools hold graduation at time and Dr. Title said this has been the custom. Graduation typically occurs on the last day of school unless the last day is a Friday.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Approval of Minutes*

*Approval of the Minutes of the March 15, 2016 Regular Meeting*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 15, 2016.

**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

*Superintendent Report*

Dr. Title reviewed the current budget number with a handout that showed the First Selectman's net reduction of \$730K, the BOS reduction of \$1.25 million and the BOF increase of \$250K, resulting in a final BOE budget number of \$165,658,561, equivalent to a 1.52% increase over last year. The Town charter has an appeal process for budget adjustments - which must be done within 10 days of the notice - which was received today, April 5. Risks with these cuts are (1) unknown health experience from March to June, (2) a potential \$2.3 million increase needed for health insurance in 17-18, (3) no reserve funds for elementary classes near class-size limit, and (4) a further reduction in state funding.

Mr. Dwyer said the March health insurance numbers will not be known until the end of April, and subsequent months won't be known until after the budget vote; the state funding is also an unknown.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if it was clear that 12 sections are close to the class-size limit? Dr. Title said budgeting using the grid in the budget book shows that the net exposure is 7 sections, but this can change.

Mr. Patten asked how does the Board or Board members petition to reinstate funds?

Mr. Dwyer said a Town officer or Board member may appeal, but it would need a majority vote of the Board. A letter must be written to the RTM Moderator and a Hearing is held. Dr. Title said the Hearing would happen before the budget vote.

Mr. Patten expressed concern about not having reserves in the event additional elementary teachers are needed.

*Committee/Liaison Report*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly announced the Shop and Stroll Event that supports local businesses.

Mrs. Gerber said the Chair of the FLHS building committee will request additional funds at the upcoming BOS meeting. The 4-month lead time has already been missed to order the windows.

Mr. Dwyer said TPZ and the State have approved the site plans for Holland Hill. Final interviews for architects are being conducted.

*Open Board Comment*

Mr. Patten announced that Greg Hatzis was named PTA Headmaster of the Year by the CT PTA.

Ms. Pytko was impressed with the town-wide choral event.

Mr. Llewellyn felt there should have been an entire review of the District Improvement Plan at this meeting. He also felt that links to individual FAIRTV meeting recordings from 2016 should be provided on the website.

Mr. Dwyer said the District Improvement Plan review will be covered in the fall – this was discussed at great length when the Board was discussing the District Improvement Plan. Mr. Llewellyn requested that it be done prior to Dr. Title's retirement to have a full data set.

Mrs. Gerber said the dinner to honor Mr. Hatzis will take place on May 3. Fairfield has a great track record for these awards.

Mr. Dwyer said Mr. Schulz will also be recognized in an upcoming event and details will follow.

*Adjournment*

Ms. Karnal moved, Mr. Calabrese seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

Meeting adjourned at 10:50PM

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