



# FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Special Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

5:00 PM

501 Kings Highway East  
Superintendent's Conference Room

### **In Attendance:**

Superintendent Michael Testani, Ms. Jennifer Jacobsen, Ms. Jennifer Maxon Kennelly, Ms. Carol Guernsey, Dr. Zakia Parrish, Ms. Kanicka Ingram (left at 6:11pm), Dr. James Zavodjancik (arrived at 6:11pm), Mr. Mick McGarry, FEA President, Ms. Jennifer Racioppo, FEA Representative, Dr. Jeannette Faber, FEA Representative, Ms. Jodie Shannon, FEA Representative, Ms. Kristen Hardiman

**Call to Order:** Ms. Maxon Kennelly called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

**Approval of December 5, 2023 Policy Committee meeting minutes:** Approved with changes by 3-0 vote.

### **Policy:**

#### 2024 Policy Calendar

The Policy Committee meeting calendar was approved by 3-0 vote.

#### Audit Update

Dr. Parrish stated the initial policy audit was completed in December; however, it contained several errors. Dr. Parrish requested a second review of the policies to obtain a more accurate audit. Based on the second audit review, Dr. Parrish developed a table of all policies which need to be addressed. Table 1 contains eleven policies which were completely missing and are mandated policies. Table 2 contains thirteen policies which have a 2004 adoption date and need to be reviewed and/or updated as they are also mandatory policies. The remaining policies which have an adoption date of 2004 also need to be reviewed. Some of the 2004 policies need modifications while others just need to be reviewed. Dr. Parrish explained even if there is no revision needed to a policy, it still needs to be reviewed and marked as "reviewed and adopted".

Ms. Guernsey asked if there is someone on staff who can work on editing the policies before they come before the committee. Ms. Maxon Kennelly explained that Dr. Parrish has organized the policies by importance and has already delegated them to the administrator responsible for editing the policy.

4112.4-4212.4 – Health Examination

Ms. Ingram stated she is recommending the deletion of this policy after collaborating with the HR team last November. At the November meeting, the HR team discussed the on-boarding process for new hires. It was noted the health examination form was the last on-boarding form to be provided to HR. Ms. Ingram explained the HR department then reached out to Jill Mitchell, Nursing Supervisor for the Town of Fairfield, to inquire if the health examination form was a required form. Ms. Mitchell stated the health examination form is not required since the Town no longer requires the PPD (tuberculosis) test. Based on the information provided by Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Ingram would like the committee to consider the deletion of this policy. Dr. Parrish added the policy audit did question the legality of this policy.

This policy was approved for deletion by a 3 -0 vote and will be presented to the Board for a “one and done” vote at the February 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Education meeting.

6151 – Class Size

Ms. Ingram explained she would like to leave the Class Size policy “as is” and not as proposed in the packet. The reason for this change is there was a discussion between the HR Department and the Finance Department about the budget book having different class size information which is why HR proposed a revised policy. However, after looking at this policy, the Executive team has decided not to edit the class size policy at this time.

Ms. Jacobsen asked Ms. Ingram who developed the draft language for this policy. Ms. Ingram stated the draft language came from what the District is currently doing. Superintendent Testani requested the asterisk referencing the “Superintendent having discretion to increase class size based on enrollment” be eliminated since the word “shall” is in the first paragraph of the policy.

Ms. Maxon Kennelly stated she is interested in a more accurate policy and appreciates the opportunity to look at this policy again. Ms. Jacobsen agreed with Ms. Maxon Kennelly that there should be edits to this policy to include dates for collapsing classes. Ms. Guernsey stated she is interested in protecting our lower-class sizes.

Ms. Jacobsen will provide a proposed edit this policy to be reviewed at the next Policy meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

6111 – Student Calendar

Ms. Maxon Kennelly asked Superintendent Testani and Dr. Parrish if they had any reservations about the language recommendations to this policy. Dr. Parrish explained the Head Principals prefer to use Monday through Friday as the definition of “full week”. Ms. Maxon Kennelly is interested in knowing why the Head Principals chose that time period instead of Sunday through Saturday as the definition of “full week” since it will have an impact on the calendar in year 2028.

Ms. Maxon Kennelly asked Dr. Parrish to speak to the Head Principals for feedback on when the graduation date should be set. Ms. Guernsey would like feedback from the Head Principals on the flexibility of setting the graduation date between 180 school days versus 182 school days.

This policy will be on the agenda for discussion at the February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## Grading Policy

Ms. Maxon Kennelly stated the language on Page 13 of the packet will be the preamble to this policy.

Ms. Guernsey stated she is interested in language on mid-term exams and getting feedback from principals, teachers, and students on mid-term exams. Ms. Guernsey is interested in hearing how mid-term exams affect the students' social and emotional well being. Ms. Maxon Kennelly stated she is not interested in eliminating mid-term exams. Ms. Racioppo explained the committee would get different answers from different departments regarding the effectiveness of mid-term exams. Ms. Racioppo stated when the District did not have mid-term exams, students were happy in January but very stressed in June when it came time for final exams, especially with the freshmen. Ms. Racioppo is in support of keeping mid-term exams since it gives the teacher the opportunity to educate the freshman and prep them on test taking skills. Her experience has shown the freshmen do better on final exams when they administer mid-term exams.

Dr. Faber stated her experience has shown mid-term exams cause stress for her students, especially in literature. Dr. Faber explained mid-term exams create a tremendous amount of work for teachers in addition to their work of closing out a semester.

Ms. Shannon stated there are pros and cons to the mid-term exam discussion. Ms. Shannon stated she knows of other districts that have mid-term exams; however, they are not for a two-hour duration like our mid-term exams.

The committee discussed at length the topic of weighted grades especially between College Prep, Elective and AP classes. The committee will continue discussion on this topic at the next Policy meeting when another draft is presented to the committee.

### **Open Discussion/Public Comment:**

Laura Veneman – McKinley Parent, 106 Blue Ridge Road

Ms. Veneman spoke about her concern about the Class Size policy. Ms. Veneman explained what is stated in the policy is not the current practice at school.

Mick McGarry – FEA President

Mr. McGarry spoke about continuing the conversation regarding the Grading policy. Mr. McGarry expressed the importance of getting feedback from staff. Mc Garry emphasized staff are focused on working and collaborating on this policy.

Jennifer Racioppo – FEA Representative

Ms. Racioppo stated she now understands the difference between regulations and policy. Ms. Racioppo explained staff are working together on the Grading regulations, and they have a common vision. She looks forward to the opportunity to work toward a common goal with the committee.

**Adjournment:** Ms. Maxon Kennelly adjourned the meeting at 7:54pm.