



# FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Special Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 22, 2023

5:00 PM

501 Kings Highway East  
Superintendent's Conference Room

### **In attendance:**

Ms. Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Ms. Jennifer Jacobsen, Ms. Carol Guernsey, Dr. Zakia Parrish (arrived at 5:10pm), Dr. James Zavodjancik (arrived at 5:12pm), Ms. Wendy Macchia

**Call to Order:** Ms. Maxon-Kennelly called meeting to order at 5:06 pm.

**Approval of May 2, 2023 Policy Committee meeting minutes:** Approved by 3 - 0 vote.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated although the minutes indicate Policy 6163.33 – Service Animals/Therapy Dogs would not be implemented, the policy will be on future agendas as there currently are therapy dogs in some schools.

### **Policy:**

#### Grading/Assessment Regulations

Dr. Zavodjancik reported there have been no issues with any of the regulations. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked where there is the biggest adjustment or learning curve. Dr. Zavodjancik stated not many need a learning curve, and most teachers are able to complete assessments and grade reporting on time. Dr. Zavodjancik reported compliance is self-reported by teachers and gradebooks are not pulled. Ms. Guernsey inquired what the process would be to build in oversight of these regulations. Dr. Zavodjancik reported assignments are not standard from class to class, there is not a way to look at a gradebook to determine if feedback is provided on time; there is no data inquiry that can be completed. Ms. Guernsey reported hearing there are issues with students not receiving prompt feedback or grades and is concerned, without some oversight, parents and students are set up for a difficult confrontation. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly suggested it is the house principals' responsibility to follow-up on compliance.

Ms. Guernsey inquired if parents find it helpful to be notified when their student is in the D/F range and if there has been positive feedback. Mr. Robert Smoler stated some parents are appreciative of the notification. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly was interested in principals providing some anecdotal information. Ms. Guernsey stated it would be helpful for parents to have a line of communication.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly suggested providing August PD time to familiarize staff with these regulations. Dr. Zavodjancik stated there is a plan in place for the start of the year.

Ms. Jacobsen expressed concern with the language about reducing available points for late work. Dr. Zavodjancik offered to research if points are being reduced to zero. Ms. Guernsey stated she believes this is happening. Ms. Jacobsen inquired if language could be changed to indicate that points cannot be reduced to zero. Dr. Zavodjancik stated there will be instances where this can be difficult based on the variety of rubrics used by teachers, but this is not the spirit in which this was written.

### Draft Grading Preamble

The committee agreed the first three paragraphs of the Draft Grading Preamble were acceptable. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated the committee can commit to this wording with the option of making changes in future drafts if necessary. The committee recommended striking “at all grade levels, routine” and “at the elementary level” in bullet point #1, as well as replacing “conferences, at all levels” with “meetings”. The committee recommended changing bullet point #7 to read “Ensure staff understanding and review of district grading practices and regulations.” The committee recommended the first sentence of Option Two in the Grading Policy be placed in a new bullet point between bullet points #1 and #2 in the Draft Grading Preamble. The committee recommended striking the second sentence of the last paragraph as well as the word “Infinite” in the last sentence. The committee recommended this revised preamble replace options #1 through #4 in the current Grading Policy draft.

### Grading Policy

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly inquired what the psychological impact was of cumulative grading. Dr. Zavodjancik reported hearing from principals at both high schools that students would prefer to stay with the current cumulative grading. Ms. Guernsey asked if students always know where they stand in terms of their grade. Mr. Robert Smoler stated there will be times this information is not available, for example when the portal is closed while teachers enter grades at the end of marking periods.

### Weighted Grading

Ms. Jacobsen recommended the topic of weighted grading remain in the grading policy. Dr. Parrish stated there was a sentence missing in the first paragraph of the Weighted Grading section and referred to the sentence “The grade weighting system, developed by the administration, is subject to the approval of the Superintendent who shall then present the grade weighting system to the Board for its approval” in current Policy 6146.11. Dr. Zavodjancik stated the need for a future discussion regarding the grade weighting system. Ms. Jacobsen inquired if the standalone weighted grading policy should be eliminated and inserted in the grading policy. Dr. Zavodjancik reported the preference is to insert it into the grading policy and will follow up with this topic. The committee agreed to move ahead on this topic following Dr. Zavodjancik’s future report.

### GPA

Ms. Jacobsen inquired if Health should remain excluded from GPA calculation as it is an actual course. Ms. Guernsey stated Health is as important as financial literacy. Mr. Robert Smoler stated PE is an important factor in a student's development. Dr. Zavodjancik will research a sample of the impact of PE on GPA. Ms. Jacobsen and Ms. Guernsey suggested, over a wide range of students, PE or Health grades could positively impact GPA. Dr. Parrish added both courses are a requirement for graduation. Mr. Robert Smoler suggested a Pass/Fail option. Dr. Zavodjancik will provide a data sample at a future date.

### Consistency and Expectations

Ms. Jacobsen suggested the bulk of this section should be in regulations, not policy. Dr. Zavodjancik and Mr. Robert Smoler stated some of this language presents difficulty in implementation as there can be differences between classes in the same course. Dr. Zavodjancik stated there is consistency in curriculum, but likely some differences in implementation from one class to another. Ms. Jacobsen will craft philosophical language and requested suggestions for language for this section.

### Zeros

Ms. Jacobsen and Ms. Guernsey recommended addressing this topic to ensure consistency between schools. Ms. Jacobsen requested administration provide direction on the 0/50 topic if this policy is not completed by next year. Mr. Robert Smoler stated there is nuance to this topic due to the subtle differences between students. Mr. Robert Smoler will conduct a survey before the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly will provide language for this section.

### Middle School Honors

The committee agreed these honors need to be reinstated. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly will provide language for this section.

### High School Honors

Ms. Maxon Kennelly will provide language for this section.

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

Mr. Robert Smoler was satisfied with his participation in the preceding dialogue.

**Adjournment:** Ms. Maxon-Kennelly adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm