

**NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
NEW FAIRFIELD, CT**

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Monday, July 13, 2020, at 7:00 pm.
Virtual meeting via Zoom

MINUTES – July 13, 2020

PRESENT: Peggy Katkocin (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: Kimberly LaTourette

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel and Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Athletic Director Mark Ottusch, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Khris Hall, New Fairfield Director of Health Tim Simpkins, BOF Chairman Wes Marsh, BOF members Tom Garben, Jane Landers and Cheryl Reedy

Network Administrator Paul Gouveia explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public.

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and noted that the purpose of this special meeting was to discuss reopening plans for the 2020-2021 school year.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. INFORMATION ITEM

A. New Fairfield Public Schools Reopening Plan

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the process for devising a plan for the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. The district is working in conjunction with the Governor of Connecticut, the State Department of Education and Superintendents of Schools from surrounding districts. A plan is due to the State Department of Education by July 24, 2020. The main priorities are health and safety, social emotional wellness, building relationships between staff and students and student learning.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of the road map for the reopening of schools that concentrates on Operational Systems, Teaching and Learning, and Social-Emotional Wellness. She noted that over 100 people are involved in the steering committee

to help navigate this process. A representative from each of the three teams spoke of the progress to date.

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo spoke of the Operational Systems planning team which consists of over 30 staff members. They will be meeting tomorrow to go over the first draft of reopening plan. They will address modifications that will be made to school safety based on CDC guidelines and will include classroom setup, bathroom protocol, use of the buildings outside of the school day, school lunch and transportation to and from school.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of Teaching and Learning committee and noted that this team also consists of over 30 members. She spoke of using blended learning that combines in-person and technology. Members of this team are researching resources and materials and will be making a district supply list. It was noted that students will not be sharing supplies and that some supplies will be for use in school and some will be left home.

Mrs. Luby spoke of the See Saw Technology Tool for K-3 students. This is an interactive tool designed for younger students. The older students will be using Google Classroom. The committee is working on continuity so that high school students will have all their classes in one place on Google Classroom. This committee is also working to make sure that there is sufficient professional development for staff members.

Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story spoke of the work of the Social-Emotional Wellness committee. The main role of this committee is to make sure that students, staff and families are taken care of during the transition back to school. The first step is to gather information on how students and families are doing and to make sure that all students have at least one staff member in their building that they are comfortable talking to. They are working on student engagement and emotional safety to make sure all students feel included and supportive. It was noted that families and staff also need to feel supported and included.

To date, there are three possible scenarios for the reopening of schools:

Plan A - Students fully in school with remote learning for students whose families choose to keep home. Students will stay in their group throughout the day for classes, lunch and specials. They will not interact with other students. This is the expectation as of today. Julie Luby spoke of the details of this plan.

Plan B - Blended program to have students in school part of the week and remote learning part of the week. Dr. Sanzo spoke of the details of this plan. With this model, there would be two cohorts. Students in the first cohort would be in-person on Monday and Tuesday and the second cohort would be in-person on Thursday and Friday. All students would be remote on Wednesdays to allow for a deep cleaning of the buildings.

Plan C - Julie Luby spoke of the fully on-line option that would be similar to how instruction was handled this past spring. She noted that a lot of research and professional development

will be done so that instruction will run smoothly. This option would most likely be a blend of synchronized and asynchronized learning.

Dr. Cosentino spoke of the need to make class sizes smaller. She noted that out of classroom teachers have been reassigned to be classroom teachers within their certification. The seats in the classroom will be further apart and will all face in the same direction. All students must wear masks. The Middle School schedule was modified in order to establish a cohort. The High School schedule was modified in order to maximize time with teachers, build relationships and include more math and SEL support.

Schedules for all four schools were discussed:

Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner spoke of Consolidated School and how mini lessons will be held. She noted that this plan is still in draft form. There will still be a morning meeting which would include both in-person students and remote students. They will also have movement breaks and quiet times and will break up a subject into smaller pieces. They are looking at community opportunities as well.

Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia gave an example of a third grade schedule and noted that they still plan to have the team model for 4th and 5th graders. Specials will take place in the classrooms with having the teachers move to the respective classrooms to cut down on students in the hallways.

Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli spoke of the schedule for Middle School students and specifically the CORE 21 class. The team format will still be in place with the teachers changing classrooms instead of the students. She spoke of physical activity and discussed ways to have students exercise in the classroom as well as home.

High School Principal James D'Amico noted that the block schedule that is already in place minimizes the amount of students in the hallway. He spoke of plans for dismissal and the social and emotional learning for high school students. He spoke of math workshops and plans with the Guidance Department to help the freshmen become accustomed to the school. He spoke of how these plans will be able to transition to all remote learning if necessary.

Dr. Cosentino noted that all the decisions regarding the reopening of schools are made based on guidance from the CDC, State Department of Public Health, State Department of Education and the New Fairfield Health Director Tim Simpkins. Mr. Simpkins gave a brief description and noted that everything will depend on metrics that he will continue to monitor.

Dr. Cosentino noted that the next steps are to finalize schedules and class cohort placements, continue to work with the Steering Committee and Planning Teams, and to continue Professional Development for all staff and to create support materials for families.

Dr. Cosentino thanked everyone for all their hard work with these committees. She noted that there will be a Question and Answer session on Facebook live on Wednesday July 15, 2020, at 7:00 pm.

Members of the Board of Education asked questions regarding the reopening plan. Specific topics included whether students would be allowed to change their minds about at home and in-person instruction. There was a brief discussion and it was noted that students can switch but it is hopeful that they will give notice before changing. There was a question about attendance and it was noted that students must be accountable for attending school whether it is in-person or remotely. There was a brief discussion of specials instruction which will be discussed further at the next meeting. Athletic Director Mark Ottusch gave a brief presentation of the plans for fall sports.

There was a brief discussion of the tentative plans in case of positive cases of Coronavirus in the district. It was noted that there is no plan for testing for COVID at this time.

IV. ACTION ITEM

A. New Fairfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Revised Calendar

Dr. Cosentino gave a brief explanation of the need to revise the calendar in order to move Professional Development days to the beginning of the school year. The first day of school for students would be September 2nd.

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the revised 2020-21 school calendar as presented. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos