

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Communications/Community Outreach Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Communications/Community Outreach Subcommittee

Meeting type: Special

Date of Meeting: 10/4/21

Minutes submitted by: Kimberly LaTourette

Members present: Kathy Baker, Kimberly LaTourette, Ed Sbordone, Stephanie Strazza

Members absent:

Other attendees: Pat Cosentino, Julie Luby, Rich Sanzo, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan

Place of Meeting: Special Meeting Access: Communications/Community Outreach

Subcommittee (10/4 at 7 p.m.) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/94260822308>

Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 942 6082 2308

Meeting called to order: at 7:03 p.m. by Kathy Baker.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. September 3, 2020 – Regular

Motion: To approve the minutes of September 3, 2020

Made by: Kim LaTourette

Seconded by: Ed Sbordone

Recording of Vote: All in favor

III. Action Items - none

IV. Information Items

A. Open Choice - Dr. Pat gave an overview of the Open Choice Program; we had a presentation at the last in-person BOE meeting. It has been around for a long time, popular in certain areas of the state. Its goal is to increase diversity and to give kids more opportunities. Students in Danbury Schools were given a choice to attend other local schools. Our BOE has a choice whether to participate or not. It is suggested that students begin in kindergarten. Once they are accepted into our district, they are our students and will complete their schooling in our district. Money will be given from the state to participating districts. Students are chosen from a lottery. Each year we would decide how many students we could/would take in. Typically, what you see in districts that participate is a look at enrollment during the budget process to see how many seats we could host.

There was a brief discussion about taking in Sherman students and the amount they pay.

Tim Blair asked some questions. Do the Danbury parents pay taxes that are equal to parents here in New Fairfield? Dr. Pat answered “No.” How will the extra-curricular activities take place as far as transportation? Dr. Sanzo said that transportation is separate to and from school and handled by CES, extra-curricular will be handled by parents. Dr. Pat mentioned that K-5 do not usually have transportation needs for extra activities.

Dr. Pat also mentioned the fact that we send students to other places, and we do not pay taxes or extra there.

Tim Blair mentioned again the per pupil expense in each of the schools. He also asked if anyone who wanted to live in NF could and nothing was holding them back.

Dr. Sanzo discussed the cost-sharing.

Samantha asked again about the SPED costs in case there is an emergency outplacement. Dr. Pat said she would get the answer from Chip.

Michelle O’Gara asked if we are getting an additional \$3000. Dr. Sanzo explained that the students should not cost more for the district, then the \$3000 per student can be spent however the

district sees fit.

Stephanie Strazza asked if we knew what the minimum cost for each student is. Dr. Sanzo explained that this is difficult to answer. Admins will make a recommendation to the board that would not cost the district or taxpayers money.

Olivia Micca – New Fairfield is like its own little bubble and when she went to school in New Haven, she almost felt unprepared and underexposed. She graduated in 2015.

Amanda Pergar – Asked a question regarding SPED staffing. How will we know if they will need services or not? Dr. Pat mentioned again that we will only be taking in students in kindergarten. We provide support for all kids - we have the same situation here in New Fairfield.

Tim Blair said that Danbury receives half the grant back for sending students to us and he is wondering why. He was told that the statute states that.

Ed mentioned being on the board for a while and was not aware this was coming up. This is the first time it is available for Danbury and for us to participate.

B. Parking at New Fairfield High School - Dr. Sanzo reminded everyone that we are in an active construction site. Any senior that did not get a spot in the first lottery will get one in the second, if they apply. There were some seniors and juniors interested in the shuttle - that is put on hold to make sure our main bus routes are covered to get kids to and from school. In the next couple of weeks, traffic and parking should evolve and admin have a meeting with O&G. They are working as hard as they can so that current students will remain, although it may move somewhere else on campus. They also want to make sure they have enough parking for the bus drivers as well. They had planned to do the numbering and they may be re-striping the spots in the dog park lot. That should be solidified in the next few weeks. If any students find that they do not have a spot, the admin and SRO should be able to help.

C. Quarantine School - Julie Luby will have more specific numbers for our regular meeting on Thursday. Lenny and Joan are doing a great job communicating with both parents and students. It is not required, but we want to decrease isolation. The numbers seem to be decreasing, and she is hopeful a vaccine becomes available for younger children. She is asking for outside of school activities to keep track of their cohorts and attendance so that the entire team does not have to quarantine. Tomorrow evening, town officials and admin will be meeting with fall coaches who are not in the school district to go over mitigation strategies. Dr. Pat mentioned that she is not in charge of the coaches, but the district does allow them to use their fields/facilities. Kim asked about services for students who are quarantined. Julie said that it is taken care of on a case-to-case basis. It is not compensatory but will be provided after 10 days. Amanda Lombard mentioned having her child be absent instead of attending the Q school; he completes the remote work on his own and she is not worried about the absences.

D. COVID Testing - Testing is just starting in some districts. How it works is that parents provide consent, and a certain number of students are tested randomly. Parents can always bring their children to be tested if they have concerns or their child is showing symptoms.

V. Other - none

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Ed Sbordone

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

Recording of vote: Aye – Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at: 8:09 p.m.