

Board of Education Regular Meeting 2023

Thursday, May 4, 2023 7:00 PM

New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT., 33 Route 37,
New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

III.A. April 25, 2023 - Regular

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

V. RECOGNITION ~ CABE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - *The Board welcomes public participation. Pursuant to our Board Policy, public participation is limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker and a total of no more than thirty (30) minutes total for the entire meeting. Individuals who wish to speak longer are encouraged to attend any and all related subcommittee meetings where most of the board's groundwork is done. We value your input, but due to these time limitations, we ask you to be concise and to observe the rules of common courtesy. [9320(a) of Board Bylaws]*

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

VII.A. Chairman's Report

VII.B. Superintendent's Report

VII.C. Student Representatives' Report

VII.D. Committee Reports - None

VII.E. Liaison Reports

VII.E.1. Board of Finance (*Ed Sbordone*)

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

VIII.A. New Textbook Adoption (*First Review*)

VIII.A.1. *EdGems* Core Math – Middle School

IX. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM

IX.A. FY24 Budget

X. ACTION ITEMS

X.A. Personnel Report

X.B. Board of Education Policy

X.B.1. Policy 3517.1 – Identification Badges

X.C. Acceptance of Donation

X.C.1. New Fairfield Community Thrift Shop

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - *The Board welcomes public participation. Pursuant to our Board Policy, public participation is limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker and a total of no more than thirty (30) minutes total for the entire meeting. Individuals who wish to speak longer are encouraged to attend any and all related subcommittee meetings where most of the board's groundwork is done. We value your input, but due to these time limitations, we ask you to be concise and to observe the rules of common courtesy. [9320(a) of Board Bylaws]*

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

XIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at 7:00 pm in the New Fairfield Community Room 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – April 25, 2023

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Assistant Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary School Assistant Principal Steve Groccia, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Supervisor of Special Education Melissa Busnel, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Khris Hall, and Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 6, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to add Action Item VIII B “Discussion and Vote to Censure a BOE Member for Violation of Bylaw 9327.1 (Board Member Use of Internet Social Networks).” Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Approximately ten members of the public spoke in support of the education budget and against cuts to the 2023-2024 budget. They urged fellow residents to attend the April 26th BOF meeting and to speak in support of no cuts to the BOE budget.

Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh noted that despite the fact that the BOF had received over 90 emails requesting an in-person meeting for the April 26th budget mark up, the meeting will be held via Zoom. Mr. Marsh encouraged public participation at this meeting and noted that he is available after tonight’s meeting for any questions from residents.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for their comments supporting the BOE budget.

B. Superintendent's Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow

- Welcomed everyone back to school after Spring Break.
- Dr. Crow spoke of good news regarding the Performance Index. Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby explained the Performance Index and noted that it includes several standardized test scores and gives one numerical score. She noted that scores are very close to scores from before the pandemic and that post pandemic growth in the district has exceeded the norm.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Senior Representative Grace DeMarco spoke of the following:

- AP Tests begin this week.
- Some students recently returned from a trip to Belize over Spring Break.
- Senior Prom tickets go on sale this week.
- The Junior Prom will be held this Saturday, April 29th.

Junior Representative Brennan Hearty spoke of the following:

- Junior SAT scores are available on the College Board website.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on April 25th and discussed the following.

- Discussed budget vs. actual and noted that they are in line with last year.
- There is projected to be a slight deficit in the operating budget but this projection is less than what was projected a few months ago.
- The subcommittee discussed the high school project and noted that it is on time and on budget.
- The roof leak at Consolidated School has been fixed.
- The subcommittee discussed the debt service and the possibility of using the bond premium for the budget.

2. Curriculum - Stephanie Strazza noted that this subcommittee met on April 24th and discussed the following:

- Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby presented the Philosophy statement and the Performance Index and noted that the district website has been updated with the Performance Index and current curriculum.
- There was a textbook adoption for EdGems curriculum for Math.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on April 12th and discussed the following:

- Over 60 residents spoke during Public Comment. Of the comments, 58 were in favor of the budget as is without additional cuts and two residents spoke in favor of cutting the budget.
- A BOF member presented a proposal which would bring the increase from 13.15% to 6.94% but this proposal was voted down.
- There was a motion to ask the BOS and BOE to show the effect of cuts of \$300,000 and \$1,775,000 respectively. This motion passed by a vote of 4-2-0.
- The final markup of the budget will be held on Wednesday, April 26th at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget

Dr. Crow gave a presentation of the effect of \$1,775,000 worth of cuts. He noted that the reductions were compiled in collaboration with administrators. He noted that these cuts affect all areas of education but assured everyone that all health and safety measures and state mandates will be funded. There was a discussion among the BOE members regarding this scenario. It was decided that Dr. Crow will present this to the BOF on April 26th but it was made clear that the BOE does not support this level of cuts.

B. Board of Education Policy (Second Reading)

1. Policy 3517.1 - Identification Badges

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for April 24, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. Vote to Censure a BOE Member

Dominic Cipollone spoke of a post on social media by BOE member Amy Johnson that contained misinformation. This post did not make clear that these comments were made by Ms. Johnson individually and not on behalf of the Board of Education as a whole.

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to censure Amy Johnson for violation of Bylaw 9327.1 Board Member Use of Internet Social Networks subsection 1 and 8. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to call the question regarding the above motion. Tim Blair seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR OF CALLING THE QUESTION:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza. **IN FAVOR OF MOTION:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **ABSTAINED:** Amy Johnson

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Many members of the public spoke in support of the education budget and thanked the BOE and BOS for their hard work. They encouraged members of the public to attend the BOF meeting April 26th and give opinions regarding the proposed cuts.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ed Sbordone encouraged everyone to look towards the future and to make sure their votes count at the municipal election in November.

Samantha Mannion encouraged resident that spoke at tonight's meeting to speak again at the BOF meeting on April 26th.

Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for their support and participation.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos



New Fairfield Public Schools Textbook Adoption Form

"Textbooks are defined as that resource which provides 50% or more of the information upon which the program of instruction is based." (policy 6161)

Date of Recommendation: 4/5/2023

Staff Members Making the Recommendation: Catherine Hall (Instructional Coach/Math Department Head), Alyce Misuraca (Director of Curriculum)

Course: Math 6, Math 7, Pre-Algebra (7/8), Algebra 1 (7/8)

Grade(s): 6-8

Title: EdGems Core Math Courses 1, 2, 3, 2AC and Algebra 1

Author(s): Shannon McCaw

Publisher: EdGems

Publication Date: 2018

Reading Level: The Lexile level of the textbook is two grades below the Course grade - see question 7 for more details.

Price per book and the number needed: \$54/textbook Purchasing 220 textbooks to provide a class set in each classroom. In addition, \$16/student/year for digital access to the textbook and a full platform of resources. (pricing based on a 3 year contract)

Support for the Recommended Textbook:

New Fairfield Public Schools has been researching a new MS math resource to support effective delivery of content. After reviewing and piloting multiple resources, EdGems has proven to be a nice fit. The resource supports a problems-based instructional model that engages students in regular inquiry to draw upon prior knowledge and connect that knowledge to the lesson. The resource is user friendly and provides a balance of high-quality tasks and skills practice. EdGems partners with KHAN Academy and IXL math as well as DESMOS. These partnerships allow for flexible ways to address a variety of individual student needs.

EdGems was given a rating of "Meets Expectations" for Focus and Coherence, Rigor and Mathematical Practices and Usability by EdReports. Details are outlined in the link below.

<https://www.edreports.org/reports/detail/edgems-math-2018/seventh-grade>

Content

1. *Describe how the selected textbook is aligned with course curriculum and content standards.*

Each grade level textbook is aligned to the common core standards outlined in the front matter of each chapter in the Teacher's Guide including annotation for which standards are major versus supporting clusters. The Teacher's Guide includes both pacing and a unit overview. The unit overview includes prior learning across all grade levels that the unit is based on as well as future learning including high school standards. Each section includes a lesson guide with an explore, a mini-assessment as well as tiered practice exercises. There is also a teaching tips section for teachers to prepare for common

misconceptions and places to focus in the lesson. The Mathematical Practices are addressed in the lesson guide.

2. *Describe the accuracy and timeliness of the selected textbook.*

The textbook is accurate and includes all of the standards that NFPS is required to teach in middle school mathematics. Next year the district plan is to use curriculum based on the new state model, and the textbook will help teachers to plan lessons that are in alignment with those curriculum documents.

3. *Describe how the textbook handles varying perspectives and points of view and demonstrates an unbiased approach to the content.*

EdGems includes many ancillary materials in their online teacher guides. Many of these materials are pulled from open source platforms such as KHAN Academy, IXL, Desmos, Illustrative Mathematics and Open Middle. This way the content can be presented in multiple ways, students can view the textbook, students can watch videos about the content from the textbook and students can complete activities and rich tasks based on the material as well.

Instructional Match

4. *Describe how the selected textbook supports our Vision of the Graduate and model of high-quality instruction.*

Each section of the book begins with an “Explore” activity to have students first think about how they might approach a problem or look for patterns that might lead to a solution in alignment with both the math practices and the definition of high quality instruction. These activities encourage students to collaborate and make meaning, and are always student-centered. The ***Teacher and Student Gem*** activities are also meant to be engaging and many are scaffolded to encourage students to question, collaborate, persevere and extend their thinking beyond what they were directly instructed. This approach is aligned with our vision of the graduate and high-quality instruction model.

5. *Describe elements of the textbook*

The physical textbook is broken into chapters with individual lessons and is available to all students online through their learner home page. Each lesson includes vocabulary, “I Can” statements to help focus learning and broken down examples with explanations. There is practice for each lesson. Each unit and lesson includes online student components such as videos for each lesson, online practice assignments and quizzes, and other “Gems” that teachers can assign. The format of the online component is very friendly to young learners by using “buttons” that students can select to complete their work.

Student View of EdGems:



Accessibility

6. Describe the text features and supplemental materials that provide enhanced accessibility.

The textbook and most of the ancillary materials are available in both English and Spanish. The online textbook has a reader which can read entire passages or individual words out loud, and there is a glossary of terms. The online textbook has settings where a page can be increased or decreased in size, and the contrast can be adjusted for ease of readability for different learners.

7. What is the readability level of the textbook?

From the publisher:

“The Lexile level of the textbook is two grades below the Course grade. Research has shown that students' ability to understand mathematical text and problems (i.e., what the problem is asking students to do) lead to increased proficiency in mathematical skills and thinking. It's important to say that the level of difficulty of the math doesn't change; rather, emphasis is placed on making the language as clear as possible.”

8. Describe how the textbook reflects diversity and inclusion regarding culture, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, education, and religion.

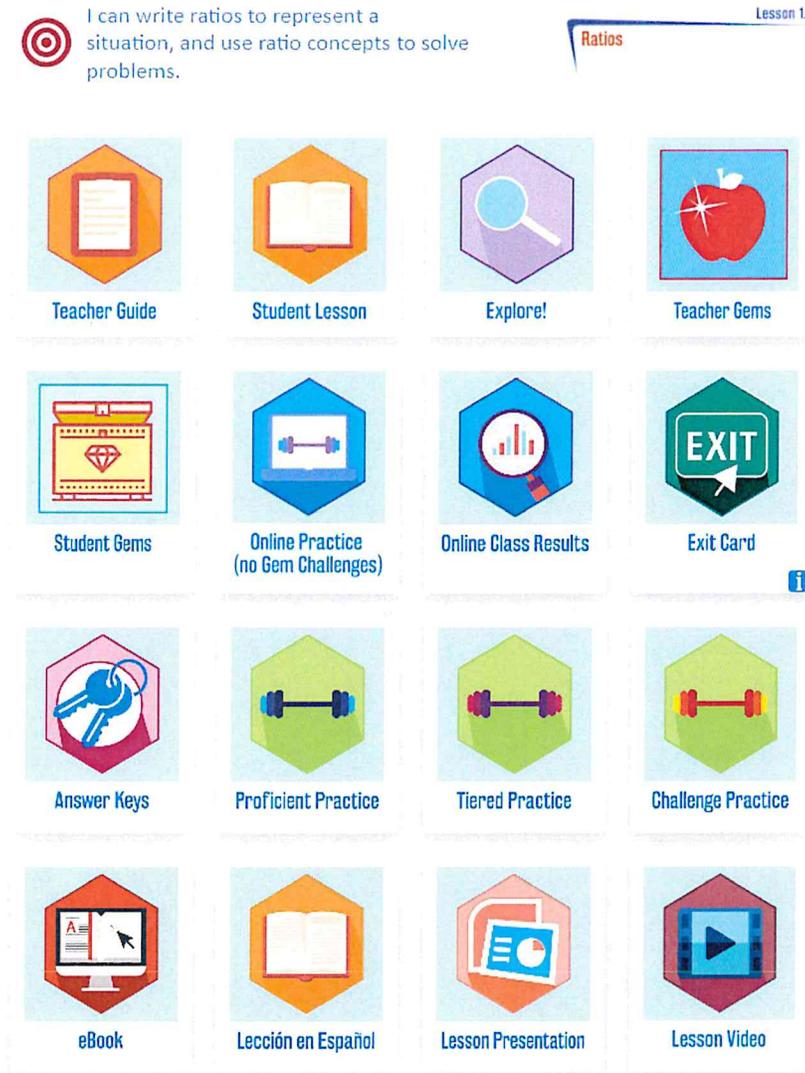
The text series is designed for learners of multiple ability levels and includes some built-in accommodations for students with disabilities. Many problems are real-world based and include scenarios from various cultures and places in the world.

See [this document](#) from the publisher for additional information.

9. Describe the supplementary materials that accompany the textbook and explain how they support student learning. Describe any errors or glitches that were encountered.

The textbook comes with supplementary materials online for both students and teachers. The student materials have been described above. The teacher materials include unit assessments, lesson quizzes, Performance Tasks, Rich tasks, student gems and teacher gems. The teacher gems are various tiered activities such as stations, card sorts where students work collaboratively to solve problems and are given regular feedback either by peers or by the teacher. Each lesson has tiered practice problems at 3 levels for students who may need scaffolding, students who are proficient, and students who are ready to learn more.

Teacher dashboard from EdGems:



Other Textbooks Reviewed: (if less than 2 others, explain)

1. Saavas Envision Math 6-8
2. Desmos Illustrative Math Curriculum

Catherine Hall
Teachers

4/14/23
Date

Catherine Hall
Department Chair (if applicable)

4/14/23
Date

Karen Sawtner
Principal

4/14/23
Date

Ally Attel
Director of Curriculum or Assistant Superintendent

4/14/23
Date



**New Fairfield Public Schools
Textbook Evaluation Form**

"Textbooks are defined as that resource which provides 50% or more of the information upon which the program of instruction is based." (policy 6161)

Participating Staff Members: Cathy Hall, Tracy Kielkucki, Sarah Lynch, Ken Seder, Pam Bruno, Sarah Devine, Kim Moran, Colin Usher, Treva King

Course: 6th and 7th grade Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1

Grade(s): 6-8

<i>(Use Rubric Below)</i>	Textbook 1 Title:	Textbook 2 Title:	Textbook 3 Title:
Publisher	Saavas Envision	Desmos Illustrative Mathematics	EdGems
Year Published	2021	still releasing content	2018
Price	n/a	\$25 digital per student	\$54 textbook & \$16 digital platform
Content			
Alignment	3	4	4
Accuracy	2	4	4
Instructional Match			
Alignment with NF's Vision of the Graduate	2	3	4
Design	2	2	4
Accessibility			
Clarity	2	3	4
Inclusivity	3	3	3
Add-ons	3	2	4
Total Team Rating	17	21	27
Notes	Text had several errors, missing some key content, online platform is buggy	Too much computer work, not enough thinking through problems collaboratively	Multitude of ancillary materials from different resources/platforms including Desmos, IXL and KHAN, includes rich tasks, has both paper and online components
External Rating (informational only)			
Which rating organization was consulted and what rating did the textbook receive? (EdReports or other)	Edreports - meets expectations	Edreports - meets expectations	Edreports - meets expectations

	RATING 1 - not at all 2 - somewhat 3 - generally 4 - mostly
Content	
Alignment	Content is aligned with course curriculum and content standards.
Accuracy	Content is free from errors, up to date, and unbiased.
Instructional Match	
Alignment with NF's Vision of the Graduate	Content is presented in an engaging manner and leads students to make meaning, think critically, and ask questions. The text promotes independence.
Design	Textbook contains a variety of instructional materials, including reflective questions, learning activities, and other features which promote learner engagement and active learning. Textbook contains a structured, clear, and logical progression of topics.
Accessibility	
Clarity	The textbook provides accessible and structured text and images to meet the needs of diverse learners. Readability is age/grade/setting appropriate.
Inclusivity	The textbook reflects diversity and inclusion regarding culture, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, education, and religion.
Add-ons	Textbook has high-quality, supplementary materials which support student learning and are free of errors and glitches.

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Security of Buildings and Grounds

Site and Building Access

Identification Badges

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of providing a safe environment for all District students and staff. To promote a safe environment, the District requires all employees, volunteers and visitors to wear, above the waist, a District issued, approved identification badge.

Required Identification: All employees, while carrying out regular employment duties, will display identification badges in plain view. Student ID badges and lanyards will be provided to all students at the middle school and high school, which authorizes students to be on campus and on school buses. ~~Students are asked~~ **High School students are required** to display their ID badge in a prominent location and to retain their ID badge. ~~Middle School students do not have to wear ID badges once in school.~~ **Middle School students must retain their ID badge, but do not have to wear their badge once in school.** These ID badges will help staff in identifying students. Students will be required to present their ID badge to enter the school building if they arrive after the start of the school day.

Issuing Identification Badges: Identification badges will be provided to all employees. The initial badge, clip or lanyard will be provided to all employees at no cost to the employee. ID badges will be replaced as necessary due to normal use, to make the photo current or for changes in employment status.

Visitors/Volunteers: All visitors/volunteers are required to check in to the main office or front desk to obtain a visitor's badge. Volunteer and visitor badges may be permanent and lent to the person or disposable. A log shall be maintained of all visitors/volunteers in the building. When visitors/volunteers leave the building, they must sign out.

All visitors shall display the visitor's badge while they are in the school building during the school day.

Visitors who do not comply with this policy shall be escorted from the property. Staff members who observe someone entering District facilities without proper identification are required to address the person or immediately report this circumstance to the administration main office or front desk.

Lost or Stolen Badges: The first time the identification badge is lost or stolen, the District will provide a replacement at no cost. Each additional identification badge requested will cost \$10.00 per badge. If a badge is lost or stolen, employees should contact Human Resources and students should contact the school main office immediately.

(cf. 1250 – Visits to the School)

(cf. 3516 – Safety)

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Security of Buildings and Grounds

Site and Building Access

Identification Badges

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

Policy adopted: December 19, 2013
Policy revised: April 3, 2014
Policy revised: June 4, 2015
Policy revised: March 3, 2022

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Fairfield, Connecticut

**NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NEW FAIRFIELD, CT**

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

This form must be completed and submitted for all in-kind and monetary donations to a school or the district. Donations valued at \$1,000 or more require BOE approval before acceptance of the donation or depositing of funds. A letter of acceptance will be sent by the appropriate staff member with a copy to the superintendent's office.

DATE: April 26, 2023

SCHOOL: Consolidated School

TYPE OF DONATION AND QUANTITY: Monetary Donation of \$2,110

CONDITION/AGE OF ITEM DONATED: NA

DONOR: New Fairfield Community Thrift Shop

SCHOOL'S PLAN FOR USE OF ITEM(S): The first grade will be going on a STEM program field trip, and this donation will cover the cost of the trip to the Ever Wonder Museum for 142 students.

APPROXIMATE VALUE: \$2,110

The approximate value denoted above has been supplied by the donor. The New Fairfield Public Schools does not attest to the accuracy of this value. It is the donor's responsibility for documentation to support this valuation for tax or any other purposes.