

Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, November 2, 2023 6:00 PM

New Fairfield Community Room, 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

II.A. June 14, 2023 - Special

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

III.A. Transition Plan

III.B. District Approaches to Address Reading

III.C. STRIDES Program Update

III.D. Dual Instruction

IV. ACTION ITEMS

V. OTHER

VI. ADJOURNMENT

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Special Education Ad Hoc Meeting type: Special
Date of Meeting: 6/14/23 Minutes submitted by: Kimberly LaTourette
Members present: Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Stephanie Strazza
Member absent: Ed Sbordone
Other attendees: Ken Craw, Katherine Matz, Dominic Cipollone
Place of meeting: Meeting Access: Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee (6/14/23 at 6:30 p.m.) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/94422663202> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 944 2266 3202

Stephanie Strazza called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 1, 2022 – approved by consensus

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. SPED Supervisor Update - Dr. Craw shared that interviews have been concluded for the new supervisor position. There were six initial interviews, and three candidates were moved on to a committee that met this past Monday. There were BOE members, Central Office staff, building administrators, teachers, parents, and related services on the committee. Two candidates have been moved forward. Dr. Craw is in the process of making a final decision. He anticipates having an announcement fairly soon. We want to make sure that we make the right choice and have the right fit for our district and community.

IV. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

A. PPS SPED Leadership Structure - Dr. Craw provided an update on the PPS SPED leadership structure. He and Katherine Matz explained the structure that would better meet the needs and conditions that we have right now in order to meet the needs of our students. We are servicing more students, have an increased number of PPTs, and have had an increase in referrals. We know that our administrators and teachers have seen students with more needs and more complicated needs. We currently have a director, a supervisor, and a PPS department chair who is also a psychologist. The department chair does not have the authority of a supervisor, and we do need this for our model to function better. When Katherine was just hired, we did have two supervisors. Work with Pre-K through transition students was able to be done more consistently. Melissa Busnel is our current supervisor, who has spent most of her time at the Pre-K to 5 level due to the attention that is needed at that level. Dr. Craw mentioned that we are very conscious about staying within our budget, and we will be able to do that with two supervisor positions that will be 11 months. We will stay cost neutral and also be able to focus at the primary and secondary level. Both supervisors will also have authority to meet the needs of that role. Kim asked questions about department chair positions in the past, as well as the role of each school's psychologists and our use of outside consultants. Katherine believes that we have enough SPED teachers to complete the academic evaluations. Ken did share that there was one SPED teacher in our budget that was cut, and we can take a close look at that.

V. OTHER – none

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Stephanie Strazza
Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Kimberly LaTourette
Meeting adjourned at: 6:56 p.m.

Existing policy updated to reflect P.A. 23-150.

Instruction

Distance Education

Virtual/Online Courses

The Board of Education believes that distance education through virtual/online courses is an opportunity for enrichment for NFHS students. Online learning has a distinct advantage in that it does not require students to be physically present in the same location as the instructor or other students. Distance education courses are part of New Fairfield's educational program delivery system to increase accessibility and flexibility in the delivery of instruction. In addition to regular classroom-based instruction, students in the district may earn credit through distance education provided by virtual/online courses.

Dual instruction is allowed as part of remote learning when it is needed to implement a student's IEP or 504 plan or as part of an intradistrict or interdistrict cooperative learning program for students on school grounds during a regular school day.

Any cooperative learning program that provides dual instruction as specified above must be implemented following a MOU between the Board of Education and the applicable bargaining unit.

Virtual schools are educational organizations that offer courses at various grade levels through Internet or Web-based methods. Virtual schools allow students to take courses not currently offered at NFHS and, as such, enrich existing curriculum.

Online courses offered via organizations such as Virtual High School shall not result in a reduction of the current number of electives offered at New Fairfield High School, nor shall it result in the reduction in force of any existing staff.

In order to earn credits in meeting the requirements for high school graduation through the successful completion of on-line coursework, the Board, in compliance with C.G.S. 10-221a (17) shall ensure, at a minimum, that (a) the workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional District classroom setting, (b) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate, (c) the course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in on-line demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs, (d) the program of instruction for such on-line coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic, and (e) the courses are (1) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (2) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Department of Higher Education or regionally accredited; or (3) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of the board examination series permitting students in grades 9 through 12 to substitute achievement of a passing score on a series of examinations approved by the State Board of Education for meeting credit requirements for graduation.

Instruction

Distance Education

Virtual/Online Courses (continued)

If the drop-out rate of the District is determined to have been 8% or higher in the previous school year, the Board of Education shall establish an on-line credit recovery program for those students who are identified as being in danger of failing to graduate. These students, once identified by certified personnel, must be allowed to complete on-line District-approved coursework toward meeting high school graduation requirements. Each high school within the District shall designate, from among existing staff, an online learning coordinator to administer and coordinate the online credit recovery program.

New Fairfield High School students may earn a maximum of six (6) units of academic credits by completing online courses: three (3) through Virtual High School and an additional three (3) with prior approval of the high school principal for other online courses. (NOTE: In light of new legislation, District may need to reconsider “cap” on number of courses.)

One or more of the following conditions must exist for students to register for an online or virtual course:

1. Only students registered at New Fairfield High School may enroll in an online or virtual course for credit.
2. The course or its equivalent is not offered at New Fairfield High School. (In the event of an unavoidable scheduling conflict that would have a negative impact on a student’s academic sequence or ability to complete proscribed graduation requirements, the administration may approve the taking of an online course as an equivalent substitute for a course offered at NFHS.)
3. The course could serve as a supplement to extended homebound instruction.
4. The district has expelled the student from the regular school setting, but educational services are to be continued.
5. The Principal, with agreement from the student's teachers and parents/guardians, determines the student requires a differentiated or accelerated learning environment for a portion of his/her academic program.

As determined by Board/school policy, students taking a virtual course will do the following:

- Adhere to the District code of conduct to include rules of behavior and consequences for violations.
- Adhere to attendance requirements of the District.
- Adhere to the District's Internet policy.
- Adhere to New Fairfield High School's policy on withdrawing from a course.

The school must receive an official record of the final grade before awarding credit toward graduation.

The site-coordinator is responsible for monitoring student progress in a virtual course.

Instruction

Distance Education (continued)

(cf. 6141.321 - Computers: Acceptable Use of the Internet)

(cf. 6141.1 - Independent Study)

(cf. 6146 - Graduation Requirements)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

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

10-221a High school graduation requirements. (as amended by P.A. 00-124, An Act Concerning High School Diplomas and Veterans of World War II, P.A. 00-156, An Act Requiring A Civics Course for High School Graduation and P.A. 08-138, An Act Concerning High School Credit for Private World Language Courses, Other Subject Areas) and P.A. 10-111, An Act Concerning Education Reform in Connecticut.

PA 22-80 An Act Concerning Childhood Mental and Physical Health Services in School.

P.A. 23-150 An Act Concerning Schools, Section 12

Policy adopted: January 5, 2006
Policy revised: December 4, 2008
Policy revised: November 4, 2010
Policy revised: November 3, 2022
Policy revised:

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Fairfield, Connecticut