

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Public Work Session**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the Fairfield Municipal Building

MR. ANTHONY DEPASCALE, BOARD PRESIDENT, CALLED THE ROLL AT 6:00 PM:

<b>TRUSTEE</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>TRUSTEE</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
Ms. Andrea Bellise-Jandoli	ABSENT	Ms. Angela Altaai	PRESENT
Mr. Joseph Fede	PRESENT	Mr. Anthony DePascale	PRESENT
Ms. Melinda Street	PRESENT		

<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
Mr. Ryan Gupta	Superintendent of Schools	PRESENT
Mr. Wally Lindsley	Business Administrator/Board Secretary	PRESENT

BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education meeting finds it necessary to meet in Executive Session (Closed to the Public) to discuss attorney/client privileged information, which is exempt from the Open Public Meetings Act.

**RECOMMENDATION TO MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education hereby convenes to Executive Session for discussion of the following subjects: **3 and 8**.

It is anticipated that the Executive Session will take approximately **75 minutes**; the Board may take action when it reconvenes to Public Session; and the minutes of the Executive Session shall be released to the public when the reason for the Executive Session no longer exists.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters or other exceptions to the sunshine laws as follows:

1. Any matter considered confidential by federal law, state statute, or court rule;
2. Any matter in which the release of information would impair the receipt of federal funds;
3. Any material which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy if disclosed;
4. Any collective bargaining agreements;

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5. Any matter involving the purchase, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds;
6. Any tactics and techniques used in protecting the safety and property of the public;
7. Any pending or anticipated litigation;
8. Personnel matter related to the employment, appointment or termination of current or prospective employees;
9. Attorney/Client privilege.

Motion by: **Angela Altaai**                      Seconded by: **Melinda Street**                      Time: **6:15 PM**

Motion to return to open session (to be moved in Public Session):

Motion by: **Melinda Street**                      Seconded by: **Angela Altaai**                      Time: **7:28 PM**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting is hereby adjourned.

Motion by: **Melinda Street**                      Seconded by: **Angela Altaai**                      Time: **7:28 PM**

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Fede, Ms. Street, Ms. Altaai, Mr. DePascale - All Ayes  
Ms. Bellise-Jandoli - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, February 20, 2025

7:30 PM at the Fairfield Municipal Building

(Access livestream at [www.fpsk6.org](http://www.fpsk6.org) at 7:30 PM. Also available on Channel 34)

*The Board will reconvene from Executive Session and Mr. Anthony DePascale, Board President, will preside and call the public meeting to order at approximately 7:30 PM.*

MR. ANTHONY DEPASCALE, BOARD PRESIDENT, CALLED THE ROLL AT 7:30 PM:

<b>TRUSTEE</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>TRUSTEE</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
Ms. Andrea Bellise-Jandoli	ABSENT	Ms. Angela Altaai	PRESENT
Mr. Joseph Fede	PRESENT	Mr. Anthony DePascale	PRESENT
Ms. Melinda Street	PRESENT		

<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
Mr. Ryan Gupta	Superintendent of Schools	PRESENT
Mr. Wally Lindsley	Business Administrator/Board Secretary	PRESENT

The public has been duly informed of this meeting in accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975 by posting, at least 48 hours in advance, a notice on the bulletin boards in Stevenson and Churchill Schools, a notice to the Township Clerk, and a notice to The Herald News and The Progress.

*Now, please join us for the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**BOARD PRESIDENT’S REPORT: NONE**

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:**

- Mr. Gupta announced that the Friday before the Super Bowl, Churchill and Stevenson schools participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring, a national event raising money to fight hunger. Students and staff wore football jerseys and brought in donations, with Churchill raising \$527 and Stevenson \$227. Impressively, two 3rd graders, Nicolette DeRusso and Madison Alley, independently raised \$37. A total of \$754 will be donated to the Caldwell Food Pantry. Special thanks to student council advisors Ms. Malinowski, Ms. Gualtieri, and Ms. Lizza for organizing the event, and to everyone who participated.
- Mr. Santana and his staff honored the Bulldogs of the Month at Churchill from September to January, awarding certificates to one student per grade who exemplifies honesty, integrity, kindness, and dedication to their studies. These students serve as role models, setting a standard of excellence for their peers.

- Ms. Nazarian, the STEAM/HEP teacher at Churchill, honored 5th graders Cameron Carter, Viviana Hernandez, and Madelyn Picarelli, along with 6th graders Alexander Penkoski, Vivienne Gabriele, and Kennedy Schaer, for reaching the semi-finals of the Interpretive Forensics Tournament, where Vivienne Gabriele advanced to the finals. She also recognized Viviana Hernandez and Madelyn Picarelli for their achievements in Total Global Competition, where Viviana's team ranked 3rd place overall and Madelyn's team ranked 1st place. Ms. Nazarian expressed gratitude to the board, administration, and parents for their support of the High Enrichment Program.
- Ms. Halen, a member of the Board of Trustees, spoke on behalf of the Fairfield Education Foundation to express gratitude to the Fairfield community for their support. Thanks to local fundraisers, local donations, corporate matches, and the Cupid's Cocktail Party, the foundation awarded \$34,900.10 in grants this year. These funds will directly benefit students and teachers, fostering innovative learning opportunities. She acknowledged the dedication of the grant committee for their careful review process and commended teachers for their effort in submitting thoughtful proposals. While not all applications were funded, she encouraged teachers to apply again in the future. The 2024-2025 Grants funded projects such as Promethean boards for the MD and 2nd-grade classrooms, sensory pathways in hallways, and steam bins for the kindergarten classrooms. Ms. Halen invited grant recipients to share their projects and their impact, closing with appreciation for everyone who contributed to making these grants possible.
- The teachers who received the FEF Grants shared how these funds have directly impacted their students. These grants have created valuable opportunities for students to learn, collaborate with their peers, and engage in critical thinking and creativity in the classroom. Thank you to the Fairfield Education Foundation for their generous support and dedication to enhancing education.

#### **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

- Mr. Gupta, the finance committee, and I have prepared a preliminary budget. Depending on the State Aid figures, which are expected to be released on February 27<sup>th</sup>, the budget may need to be adjusted accordingly. This tentative budget will be adopted at the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and submitted to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval. The DOE released a broadcast earlier this week announcing that the 2025-2026 school aid will not decrease by an amount greater than 3% of their 2024-2025 Aid. This represents a maximum deduction of \$30,945 for the District.

#### **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS/COMMENTS: (any new or old business)**

##### **Finance: Joe Fede reported:**

- The Finance Committee meeting focused on the district's ongoing efforts to operate more efficiently while working on the draft budget. The committee acknowledged the important progress made, due to the November ballot questions, which provides support for next year but will not be available after that. Efforts are underway to develop smaller, more strategic ballot questions, such as one for a permanent tax increase for education and another for a one-time tax increase to cover capital projects. The district is working on addressing both immediate needs and long-term projects, which will require careful financial planning and collaboration moving forward.

- Anthony DePascale added: The board’s ultimate goal was to plan ahead, in 2023 we anticipated the need, 2 years later for a ballot question. The finance committee has worked closely on this, and Wally and Ryan are managing the school’s budget efficiently while prioritizing education. The board aims to shift its focus from just finances to student education. The recurring ballot questions were planned in 2023 as part of a long-term strategy. Mr. DePascale asked Wally to provide an estimated cost for the boiler project.
- Wally Lindsley added: The architect's estimate for replacing the boilers at Churchill is approximately \$1.1 million, making it a significant investment. To help offset some of the costs, we are exploring a direct reimbursement program from PSE&G, which may help subsidize some of the cost.
- Anthony DePascale added: Wally and Joe discussed how PSE&G offers incentives on replacing the boilers, but the process is complex. PSE&G covers part of the work, while the school district and engineers must handle the rest, including fitting, sizing, hooking up, and testing the boilers. Wally has been working hard to maximize savings for the district, and his efforts, along with those of Ryan and Joe in finance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON: *AGENDA ITEMS ONLY***

**NONE**

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
FINANCE - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The following finance motions are made at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Anything placed on this agenda, Items **1 to 5**, will be voted upon in one motion.

Motion by **Joseph Fede** Seconded by **Melinda Street** to approve the following motions:

- 1F. To approve the Minutes from the Public & Executive Session of January 23, 2025.
- 2F. To approve the Bills and Claims List and Payroll as follows:

<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> Bills & Claims List - 2/10/2025	\$269,452.41
<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> Bills & Claims List - 2/20/2025	\$190,222.99
<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> January 27, 2025 Payroll (retro pay)	\$125,884.92
<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> January 30, 2025 Payroll	\$510,581.99
<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> February 15, 2025 Payroll	\$449,873.43

- 3F. To approve the transfer of funds for the month of January 2025 as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.
- 4F. To approve the report of the Board Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies for the period of January 1, 2025 through January 31, 2025. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10 and certify that as of January 2025, the Board Secretary's monthly financial reports did not reflect an over expenditure in any of the major accounts or funds, and based on the appropriation balances reflected on these reports and the advice of district officials, we have no reason to doubt that the district has sufficient funds available to meet its financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the financial reports for the months be accepted and shall become a part of the official minutes of this meeting.

- 5F. To approve Pascack Construction Management and Consulting for project consulting and oversight, not to exceed \$6,000.

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Fede, Ms. Street, Ms. Altaai, Mr. DePascale - All Ayes  
Ms. Bellise-Jandoli - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
PERSONNEL - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The following personnel motions are made at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

CONSENT AGENDA

Anything placed on this agenda, Items **1 - 8**, will be voted upon in one motion.

Motion by **Angela Altaai** Seconded by **Joseph Fede** to approve the following motions:

1P. To approve the following mentors for the 2024/2025 school year. Fee is paid by the novice teacher.

Mentor	Novice Teacher
Dorian Nazarian	Joseph Ciccolini
James Verrengia	Amy Staudinger

2P. To approve the following revised club position from the August 15, 2024 agenda for the 2024/2025 school year:

Club	School	Stipend
Art Club to Homework Club	AES	\$1,143.68

3P. To approve the following staff members as club advisors for the 2024/2025 school year:

Club	School	Name	Stipend
Art Club Spring	WCS	Brianna McKernan	\$1,143.68
Homework Club	AES	Laura Barra	\$1,143.68
Homework Club	AES	Maria Suppa	\$1,143.68

4P. To rescind the resignation of Jennifer Calello and approve a change of assignment from a paraprofessional 5 days per week to 3 days per week at \$20 per hour effective February 10, 2025.

5P. To approve the leave of absence for the following employee:

Name	Location	Position	Maternity/ Disability Leave	NJLA/FMLA w/o pay, but with benefits	Return Date
Michelle Manna	AES	Teacher of 2nd Grade	05/19/2025 - 06/20/2025	08/28/2025 - 11/19/2025	12/01/2025

(NOTE: All dates are considered “on or about”)

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
PERSONNEL - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

6P. To approve the retirement/resignation of the following staff members:

Name	Location	Position	Reason	*Last Day of Employment
Nicole Carnovale	AES	Teacher of Kindergarten	Retirement	06/30/2025
Gabriella Day	AES	Guidance Counselor	Resignation	04/04/2025
Roseanne D’Urso	AES	Paraprofessional	Retirement	06/30/2025
Addie Fasulo	AES	Teacher of First Grade	Retirement	06/30/2025

7P. To approve the appointment of the following staff member for the 2024/2025 school year, pending receipt of all required documentation:

Name	Location/Position	Tenure Track or Leave Replacement	Replacing or Vacant Position	Step	Prorated Salary/Hourly Rate	Effective Date(s) on or about:
Carmela D’Angelo	AES Playground/ Cafeteria Aide	N/A	Vacant Position 4 days per week	N/A	\$16.00	02/21/2025

8P. To approve the substitute rate for Amy Staudinger from \$130 per day as per the January 23, 2025 board meeting to \$150 per day.

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Fede, Ms. Street, Ms. Altaai, Mr. DePascale - All Ayes  
Ms. Bellise-Jandoli - Absent



**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
CURRICULUM/PROGRAM - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The following curriculum/program motions are made at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Anything placed on this agenda, Items 1 - 2, will be voted upon in one motion.

Motion by **Angela Altaai** Seconded by **Melinda Street** to approve the following motions:

1C. To approve the following requests for Professional Development:

Employee Name	Conference/Workshop	Location	Date(s)	Expenses*
Lisa Salant	(BER) Purposeful Play to Increase Students' Academic Learning and Social-Emotional Growth	Virtual	Self Paced	Registration Fee: \$295.00 IDEA Funds
Susan Healy	(BER) Restorative Practices in the Classroom	Virtual	Self Paced	Registration Fee: \$295.00 IDEA Funds
Wally Lindsley	NJASBO Purchasing Workshop	Whippany, NJ	03/27/2025	Registration Fee: \$145.00 Cost of Mileage: \$8.74
Wally Lindsley	NJASBO Annual Conference	Atlantic City, NJ	06/04/2025 to 06/06/2025	Registration Fee: \$500.00 Cost of Hotel: \$248.00 Personal Expenses: Cost of Mileage/Tolls: \$146.84 Cost of Incidentals: \$170.00
Patricia Iandolo, AnnaMaria Karch	NJASBO Administrative Assistant Workshop	Whippany, NJ	05/20/2025	Registration Fee: \$145.00 each Cost of Mileage: \$8.74 each
Michelle Adams, Zayra Garcia	NJASBO Accounts Payable Workshop	Whippany, NJ	05/20/2025	Registration Fee: \$145.00 each Cost of Mileage: \$8.74 each
Zayra Garcia	NJASBO Introduction to Payroll Workshop	Virtual	Self Paced	Registration Fee: \$325.00

\*Estimated reimbursement of mileage, meals, and incidentals (according to NJ per diem rates) to be paid pending completion of the workshop and submission of the travel report.

2C. To approve the SEMI Program Waiver as follows:

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C 6A:23A-5.3(b)1 provides that a school district may request a waiver of compliance with respect to the District's participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for the 2025-2026 school year; and

WHEREAS, the Fairfield Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that it projects Fairfield will not meet the minimum number of Medicaid eligible classified students; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education hereby authorizes the Chief School Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools, in the County of Essex, an appropriate waiver of the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.3(b)1 for the 2025-2026 school year.

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Fede, Ms. Street, Ms. Altaai, Mr. DePascale - All Ayes  
Ms. Bellise-Jandoli - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
POLICY - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The following policy motions are made at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Anything placed on this agenda, Items **1 - 2**, will be voted upon in one motion.

Motion by **Melinda Street** Seconded by **Joseph Fede** to approve the following motions:

1PO. To accept the following Superintendent’s HIB Investigation results as reported during Executive Session on January 23, 2025:

HIB incidents WSCS #7 2024-25, WSCS #8 2024-25 and WSCS #10 2024-25 were reported to the principal and reviewed by the Superintendent. After a full investigation, it was determined that the incidents **were not** within the scope of the ABR definition of HIB.

HIB incidents WSCS #9 2024-25 was reported to the principal and reviewed by the Superintendent. After a full investigation, it was determined that the incident **was** within the scope of the ABR definition of HIB.

2PO. To accept the first reading of the following policies and regulations as noted:

<u>Policy #</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Status</u>
P 5512	Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (M)	Revised
P 5533	Student Smoking (M)	Revised
R 5533	Student Smoking	Revised
P & R 7441	Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings and On School Grounds (M)	Revised
P & R 9320	Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies (M)	Revised
P 5111	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M)	Revised
P 5701	Academic Integrity	Revised
P 5710	Student Grievance	Revised
P 8500	Food Services (M)	Revised

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Fede, Ms. Street, Ms. Altaai, Mr. DePascale - All Ayes  
Ms. Bellise-Jandoli - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
ENROLLMENT - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Students 6/7/2024</u>	<u>Students 2/14/2025</u>
Preschool Inclusive	17	26
Preschool Disabilities	17	8
Kindergarten	92	98
First	96	92
Second	99	94
Third	84	102
Fourth	<del>108</del> <b>109</b>	85
Fifth	108	109
Sixth	86	108
<b>Out-of-District</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Charter School</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>727</b>

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The Board President will open the floor to the public comments on non-agenda items.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS: NON-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Member of the public asked about a future referendum. - Mr. DePascale and Mr. Fede responded.

Member of the public asked if the state contributes to some of the capital expenditures? Additionally, asked Mr. Fede to explain fund balance and how much is in the capital reserves. - Mr. Lindsley, Mr. Fede and Mr. DePascale responded.

**NEXT MEETING**

BE IT RESOLVED that the next meeting will be held, in person, on March 13, 2025, Public Work Session beginning at 6:00 PM followed by Executive Session with Public Session resuming at approximately 7:30 PM, at the Fairfield Municipal Building.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting is hereby adjourned.

Motion by: **Joseph Fede**

Seconded by: **Melinda Street**

Time: **8:30 PM**

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Fede, Ms. Street, Ms. Altaai, Mr. DePascale - All Ayes

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli - Absent