

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Public Work Session**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 19, 2026 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	ABSENT	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, 7 and 8.**

It is anticipated that the Executive Session will take approximately **1 hour and 7 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 that would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy if disclosed;
4. Any collective bargaining agreements;

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Public Work Session**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 6:00 PM

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 matters 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: **6:21 PM**

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

Motion by: **Angela Altaai**                      Seconded by: **Melinda Street**                      Time: **7:27 PM**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting is hereby adjourned and moved to Public Session.

Motion by: **Angela Altaai**                      Seconded by: **Melinda Street**                      Time: **7:27 PM**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli, Mr. Fede - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 19, 2026

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:

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

ADMINISTRATION	POSITION	ATTENDANCE
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:**

Mr. DePascale congratulated the Fairfield Education Foundation for their recent successful event.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:**

Mr. Gupta welcomed the new Acting Principal, Dr. Paul Casarico, along with Thomas Majocha, who will assume the role of Principal of Winston Churchill beginning in the 2026-27 school year.

**BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:**

Mr. Lindsley discussed the tentative budget and noted a more detailed budget presentation will be provided at the April board meeting. He also shared an update regarding a new law related to legal notices.

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

**Personnel: Angela Altaai reported:** The district is still hiring instruction aides. Community members are encouraged to apply and spread the word.

**HSA: Angela Altaai reported:** Some upcoming events to mark on your calendar:

- Skate Night is scheduled for March 27.
- The Sip and Clip is scheduled for April 2, at the VFW.
- The Tricky Tray “Nashville Nights” is scheduled for May 7, and tickets are on sale through the membership toolkit.
- Second grade dance is scheduled for April 17.
- Sixth grade dance is scheduled for June 5.

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

**NONE**

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
FINANCE - MARCH 19, 2026**

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Anything placed on this agenda, Items **1-10**, will be voted upon in one motion.

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

- 1F. To approve the Minutes from the Public & Executive Session of February 26, 2026.
- 2F. To approve the Bills and Claims List and Payroll as follows:

<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> Bills & Claims List - 3/19/2026	\$422,193.48
<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> February 28, 2026 Payroll	\$432,397.37
<b>Ratify and Affirm</b> March 15, 2026 Payroll	\$429,984.32

- 3F. To approve the transfer of funds for the month of February 2026 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 February 1, 2026 through February 28, 2026. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10 and certify that as of February 2026 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. Approval to adopt the Tentative Budget for SY 2026-2027 as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that the TENTATIVE budget for the Fairfield Board of Education, in the County of Essex, State of New Jersey be approved for the 2026-2027 school year using the 2026-2027 school year state aid figures and the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary be authorized to submit the TENTATIVE budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline, as follows:

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
FINANCE - MARCH 19, 2026**

ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE 2026-2027 SCHOOL BUDGET

	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Special Revenues</b>	<b>Debt Service</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2026-2027 Total Expenditures</b>	\$19,761,483	\$286,690	\$0	\$20,048,173
<b>Less: Anticipated Revenues</b>	\$ 3,400,303	\$286,690	\$0	\$ 3,686,993
<b>Taxes to be Raised</b>	\$16,361,180	\$0	\$0	\$16,361,180

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education advertises said tentative budget in the Progress in accordance with the form suggested by the State Department of Education and according to the law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education public meeting be held at the Fairfield Municipal Building on April 30, 2026 at 7:30 PM for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 school year.

6F. To approve the Appropriation of Legal Reserves as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education includes in the final budget an appropriation of surplus in the amount of \$605,255.

7F. Adjustment for Health Care Costs

BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education includes in the final budget the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of \$769,532. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health premiums.

8F. Capital Reserve Withdrawal - Other Capital Projects

BE IT RESOLVED that included in the general fund revenue appropriations, budget line 600 is a withdrawal from Capital Reserve - Other Capital Projects in the amount of \$1,660,000 for other capital project costs associated with Adlai E. Stevenson School (boiler replacement), Winston S. Churchill School (recreation improvement), (media center improvements), and District water improvements. The total cost of these projects is \$1,660,000, which represents expenditures for construction elements or projects that are in addition to the facilities efficiency standards determined by the Commissioner as necessary to achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
FINANCE - MARCH 19, 2026**

9F. Maximum Travel

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, a board of education must establish a maximum dollar limit for travel expenditure, as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq.,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of \$29,700 for the 2026-2027 school year.

10F. Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement 2026-2027

WHEREAS, the Fairfield Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3 et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$500 per staff member, where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and

WHEREAS, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 but deemed by the board of education to be necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out-of-District Travel and Reimbursement Forms;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 as being necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out-of-District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; and

WHEREAS, the Fairfield Board of Education established \$23,050 as the maximum travel amount for the current school year and has expended \$9,130 as of this date;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of \$29,700 for the 2026-2027 school year.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli, Mr. Fede - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
ADMINISTRATIVE - MARCH 19, 2026**

The following administrative motion is made at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

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

1A. **BANK**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfield Board of Education reaffirms the designation of ***Columbia Bank and/or its successors*** as its official depositories of school monies and other funds of this District for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Bank be authorized to honor warrants drawn upon the funds of the Fairfield Board of Education and that the officers authorized to sign checks be amended to the following warrant officers:

<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Signatures Required</u>
Churchill Student Activity Account	Meghan Cafone and Ryan Gupta or Wally Lindsley

**ROLL CALL**

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

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli, Mr. Fede - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
CONTRACTS - MARCH 19, 2026**

The following contract motion is made at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

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

- 1CO. To approve the participation in a Joint Transportation Agreement with the Sussex County Regional Cooperative for Special Education, Field Trip, Public and Private School Transportation for the 2026-2027 school year.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli, Mr. Fede - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS - MARCH 19, 2026**

The following buildings and grounds motion is made at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

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

1BG. To approve the following Building Use Applications:

<u>Organization Group/Location/Purpose</u>	<u>Date and Time Slot</u>
Brain Show (HSA) Churchill Gym	Retroactively to 3/11/2026 11:00 AM - 3:30 PM
Brain Show (HSA) Stevenson Gym	Retroactively to 3/16/2026 7:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Fairfield Recreation Department Baseball/Softball Practice and Games Churchill and Stevenson Fields	Retroactively to 3/16/2026 - 8/8/2026 Monday - Friday 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM Saturday and Sunday 8:30 AM - 7:00 PM
HSA 6th Grade Breakfast Churchill Cafeteria	April 30, 2026 7:30 AM - 10:30 AM

**ROLL CALL**

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

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli, Mr. Fede - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
PERSONNEL - MARCH 19, 2026**

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Anything placed on this agenda, Items 1-9 will be voted upon in one motion.

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

- 1P. To approve the appointment(s) of the following staff member(s) for the 2025-2026 school year, pending receipt of all required documentation:

Name	Location/ Position	Prorated Salary/Hourly Rate	Effective Date(s) on or about:
Stefano Esposito	Part-Time Custodian	\$25 per hour	04/01/2026

- 2P. To ratify and affirm the appointment of the following staff member for the 2025-2026 school year, effective March 12, 2026:

Name	Location/ Position	Tenure Track or Leave Replacement	Replacing or Vacant Position	Step	Prorated Salary/Hourly Rate
Sabrina Forte	School Psychologist	Leave Replacement	Jennifer Singh	MA+30, 3	\$67,624

- 3P. To approve the appointment(s) of the following staff member(s) for the 2025-2026 school year, pending receipt of all required documentation:

Name	Location/ Position	Tenure Track or Leave Replacement	Replacing or New Position	Step	Prorated Salary/Hourly Rate	Effective Date(s) on or about:
Darlene Sardinsky	District LDTC	Tenure Track	Jennifer Ashinsky	MA+30, 15	\$96,684	05/18/2026

- 4P. To approve Dr. Paul Casarico as Acting Principal of Winston S. Churchill School, effective immediately, pending receipt of all required documentation, through June 30, 2026, at a per diem rate of \$550 per day.

- 5P. To approve Thomas Majocho as Principal of Winston S. Churchill School, at a salary of \$137,000 for the 2026-2027 school year, pending receipt of all required documentation.

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
PERSONNEL - MARCH 19, 2026**

- 6P. To ratify and affirm our current employee, Crystal Elie, to also serve as a teacher substitute, as needed.
- 7P. To approve the paid medical leave of absence for Employee #100088 retroactively from March 5, 2026 through June 30, 2026 using accrued sick days.
- 8P. To amend the return date of the leave of absence for the following employee:

Name	Location	Position	Maternity/ Disability Leave	NJLA/FMLA w/o pay, but with benefits	Return Date
Melisa Locantore	AES	Teacher of 1st Grade	05/20/2026 - 06/19/2026	08/31/2026 - 11/20/2026	<b>2027/2028 school year</b>

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

- 9P. To approve the resignation of the following staff member:

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Last Day of Employment
Sonal Patel	District	Occupational Therapist	Resignation	03/31/2026

**ROLL CALL**

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

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
CURRICULUM/PROGRAM - MARCH 19, 2026**

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

- 1C. To approve the following Summer 2026 Program outline, which delineates staff positions, expenses, and hours required for the extended school year:

Summer 2026 Positions						
<b><u>OUTSIDE CONTRACTED SERVICES</u></b>	Staff needed	Days per person	# Hours per day	Total hours	Hourly rate	Not to Exceed
Physical Therapist		N/A	as needed			\$2,500.00
<b><u>IN-HOUSE STAFF</u></b>						
Speech Therapist	1	20	4.5	90	\$61.85	\$5,566.50
Occupational Therapist	1	20	4.5	90	\$61.85	\$5,566.50
Primary MD Teacher	4	20	4.5	360	\$61.85	\$22,266.00
School Nurse	1	20	4.5	90	\$61.85	\$5,566.50
District Instructional Aides (MD) *Non-District: \$16.00	5	20	4.0	400	*\$20.50	Not to Exceed \$8,500.00
Substitute Teachers and Nurse (as needed)	**Hired teacher and nurse salaries will be adjusted for any time a sub is used.					**Adjusted
CHILD STUDY TEAM (LDTC, Psychologist, Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist)	4	For student contact time and required meetings.			\$61.85 per hour	Not to exceed \$8,000.00
<b>TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED</b>						<b>\$57,965.50</b>

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
CURRICULUM/PROGRAM - MARCH 19, 2026**

2C. To amend the expenses for the following request for Professional Development:

Employee Name	Conference/Workshop	Location	Date(s)	Expenses*
Lisa Giuffre	NJSHA Annual Convention	Iselin, NJ	04/16 and 04/17/2026	Registration Fee: \$285.00 Cost of Mileage/Tolls: <b>\$ 74.61 (revised)</b>

\*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.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli, Mr. Fede - Absent

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
ENROLLMENT - MARCH 19, 2026**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Students 6/30/2025</u>	<u>Students 3/13/2026</u>
Preschool Inclusive	27	17
Preschool Disabilities	10	16
Kindergarten	99	97
First	93	100
Second	94	87
Third	104	98
Fourth	84	106
Fifth	108	89
Sixth	110	107
<b>Out-of-District</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Charter School</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>722</b>

**FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
MARCH 19, 2026**

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

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

**NONE**

**NEXT MEETING**

BE IT RESOLVED that the next meeting will be held, in person, on April 30, 2026, 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: **Melinda Street**

Seconded by: **Angela Altaai**

Time: **7:40 PM**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Ms. Bellise-Jandoli, Mr. Fede - Absent