

Board of Education Regular Meeting

Thursday, March 5, 2026 7:00 PM

New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT. In the event of inclement weather, this meeting will change to remote and a virtual link will be provided on our website and distributed. , 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

III.A. February 5, 2026 - Regular

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- V. **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]*

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

VI.A. Chairman's Report

VI.B. Superintendent's Report

VI.C. Student Representatives' Report

VI.D. Committee Reports

VI.D.1. Business Operations/Resource Management (*Greg Flanagan*)

VI.D.2. Curriculum (*Amy Johnson*)

VI.D.3. Policy (*Samantha Mannion*)

VI.E. Liaison Reports

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

VI.E.2. Parks and Recreation Committee (*K. LaTourette, G. Flanagan*)

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

VII.A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

VII.B. Anxious Generation

VII.C. 2025-26 District Calendar Update

VII.D. 2026-27 FY Budget Update

VIII. **ACTION ITEMS**

VIII.A. Personnel Report

VIII.B. Board of Education Policy

VIII.B.1. Policy 6161.12 – Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

VIII.C. Continuation of Health Benefits

IX. **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]*

X. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

XI. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

XII. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – February 5, 2026

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, BOF members Jessica Sanchez and Rick Regan

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. January 15, 2026 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.
- B. January 20, 2026 - Special meeting - Approved by consensus.
- C. January 21, 2026 - Special meeting - Approved by consensus.
- D. January 27, 2026 - Special meeting - Approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BOF member Jessica Sanchez asked about the possibility of negotiating the cost of PowerSchool.

VI. ACTION ITEM

- A. Fiscal year 2026-2027 Operating Budget and Capital Budget

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the proposed budget for 2026-2027. Each Board member gave their opinions regarding this budget. There was a discussion of increasing cost of Special Education and there was a suggestion of possibly forgoing some of the Capital Budget to cover Special Education expenses. Dr. Craw noted that the budget is starting with a \$150,000 deficit due to attrition.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of the 2026-27 Board of Education's operating budget in the amount of \$53,591,293 an increase of 4.44%, and the 2026-27 Board of Education's capital budget in the amount of \$615,000. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to amend the previous motion to increase the capital budget in the amount from \$615,000 to \$623,000. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR OF AMENDMENT:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone. **IN FAVOR OF MOTION AS AMENDED:** Kathy Baker, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

OPPOSED TO MOTION AS AMENDED: Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, and Samantha Mannion **MOTION APPROVED**

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report - Dominic Cipollone encouraged everyone to stay safe and warm.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw spoke of the following:

- Chronic absenteeism has declined from 13% to 9%. Staff attendance has been trending over 95%.
- Testing for Elementary School and Middle School will begin soon.
- Encouraged students to challenge themselves when picking classes for next year.
- Congratulated Dr. Woleck on her second anniversary in New Fairfield.

C. Student Representative Report

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- The Tri-M Talent show was held on February 4th.
- The Program of Studies for the 2026-2027 school year is now available.
- A Career and Trade panel will be held on February 6th.
- School will not be in session on Feb. 13th and 16th.
- The Spring Musical "The Addams Family" will be held from March 19th to 22nd.
- Festival of Cultures will be held on March 28th.
- SEE Project proposals for the Seniors are due on February 27th.
- The Junior trip to Washington, DC will be held from March 11th to March 13th.

D. Committee Reports

1. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on January 28th. Policy 6161.12-was brought forward for a first reading and it was decided to suspend the rules regarding Policy 3542.43 and bring it forward for a vote at tonight's meeting. The subcommittee also discussed the policy regarding residency.

2. Special Education Ad Hoc - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this committee met on February 5th and discussed the Bridge Program. They discussed the best ways to keep students in the district.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone spoke of the BOF meeting of January 28th:

The BOF discussed medical claims for the past six years and compared USI claims projection, Anthem claims projection, budgeted claims, actual claims and the balance at the end of each fiscal year. They showed charts that show how the Medical Reserve changed over the past six years. The Board discussed the aligning the data with the Reserve policy and how to manage the fund to keep it at or above 20% of Anthem's claims. The Board discussed the optimal amount to keep in the Medical Reserve and end-of -year actual claims projection.

It was noted at the BOF meeting that the BOF audit subcommittee met on January 22nd. Purchasing Agent for Patty Mota for supplying the subcommittee with a copy of the New Fairfield RFP for auditors in 2024. At that point, there were no bidders audit and therefore, the current auditors remained in place. The subcommittee also discussed whether or not it was necessary to go out to bid for an auditor at this time. It was decided to keep the same audit firm for at least another year. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the boat docks and it was decided that more information is needed and this will be discussed at a future meeting.

The BOS and BOE will present their budgets to the BOF on Saturday, March 7th. The BOE will present at 9:00 a.m.

The BOF approved the Debt policy with a minor change. The Fraud policy will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Medical claims for January and there was also a Prescription refund check of \$115,000.

The BOF reviewed the unassigned general fund balance and discussed the estimate for June 30, 2026.

It was noted that there is a current balance of \$739,000 above the required 16.67% of a year's expenditures. The next meeting of the BOF will be on Wednesday, February 25th.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

Fire Tanks - Carrie DePuy noted that she received an update for the PBC and the issue regarding the fire tanks is isolated. A plan to repair the fire tanks is forthcoming from the contractor.

Propane Update - Carrie DePuy noted that they may go to litigation for the propane issue at the high school. Information is forthcoming.

Bus Lot Update - The Bus Lot package was submitted to the Zoning Commission on February 4th with some minor updates. It is hopeful that this can go out to bid this spring.

B. Board of Education Policy (First Reading)

1. Policy 6161.12-Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for January 29, 2026, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

B. Board of Education Policy

Suspension of the Rules (referring to Policy 3542.43)

1. Policy 3542.43 - Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board suspension of the rules referring to Policy 3542.43 - Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges Motion. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Board of Education Policy 3542.43 - Collection of Unpaid Meal Charge. Amy Johnson seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Greg Flanagan specified that he is in favor of the budget. Dominic Cipollone spoke of the budget process and encouraged residents to attend budget workshops.

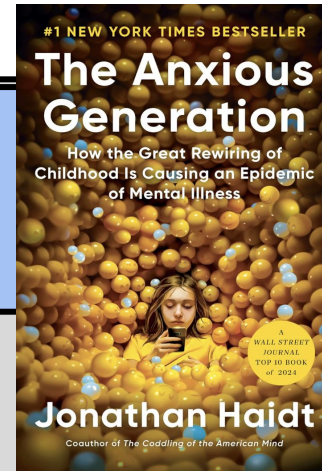
XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Kloos

Anxious Generation: Our Next Steps

**New Fairfield Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting
March 5, 2026**



Our Process

- **NFPS Community-Wide Read** (Summer / Fall 2025)
- **Community Conversations** (November / December 2025)
- **Development of Emerging Themes and Action Steps**
(administrative team, wellness strategic planning group - January / February 2026)

Theme 1: Digital Literacy / AI Competencies

Building skills intentionally that allow students to effectively navigate decision-making and use of digital devices and platforms (including in the age of AI).

Action Steps:

- Map K-12 Digital Literacy Learning Progression and AI Competencies aligned to NFPS Vision of a Learner to be integrated into curriculum learning experiences, 2026-27.
- Ongoing review of technology usage (frequency and type) to foster effective strategies in the use of technology for teaching and learning.

Theme 2: The Role and Use of 1:1 Devices in Schools

Examining access to and use of personal devices during the school day in our schools (NFHS).

Action Steps:

- BOE Policy Subcommittee update of cell phone use and discussion of personal device / BYOD regulations in NFHS (2-25-26)
- Shift BYOD practices at NFHS to student use of district-provided devices (Chromebooks) during the school day rather than personal devices.

Theme 3: Play and Unstructured Time for Children

Engaging elementary and middle school children in screen-free play and unstructured time during their day (including outside of school) to foster the development of the whole child.

Action Steps:

- Ongoing review of technology use in the school day to examine balance of screen time and opportunities for screen-free play (maintain recess time; indoor recess - board games, books, etc.;)
- Collaborate with PTO to structure school community events that minimize screens (phone-free NFMS dances, Family Game / Bingo Night, etc.)
- Outreach and communicate with community organizations (NF Parks and Rec, etc.) to explore opportunities for play at NF playgrounds, screen-free activities, etc.

Theme 4: Social Skills and Human Connection in the Digital Age

Fostering human connection, communication, and social skills to preserve student wellness and protect against mental health issues (loneliness, depression, etc.).

Action Steps:

- Map K-12 Social / Emotional Learning Skills to integrate self-regulation skills, relationship and interaction skills (social conflict, etc.), and responsible problem-solving skills into curriculum and school-based experiences.

Theme 5: Navigating Parenting in the Digital Age

Supporting families as they navigate parenting in the digital age through collective community efforts.

Action Steps:

- Provide communication and resources to families through school newsletters, websites, etc. that share strategies related to use of technology, social development, building independence and responsibility in children, impact of screen time, etc.
- Inspire community groups and organizations to launch collective initiatives (ie. *Wait Until 8th*).
- Partner with PTO and interested community members who may be able to build connections with local mental health practitioners / organizations to offer in-person parent speaker re: parenting, anxiety, technology use, etc. for parental connections.

Questions and Discussion

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS - 2025-2026 Calendar *Revised*

August (2)				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

21 -22 - New Teacher Orientation
 25 – First Day for Teachers
 26 – 27 - Professional Development Days
 28 - First Day for Students

September (20)				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

1 - Labor Day
 23 – Rosh Hashana

October (20)				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

2 – Yom Kippur
 3 – Professional Development Day
 13 - Columbus Day

November (16)				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

4 - Election Day - Professional Development Day
 5, 6, 7, - Parent-Teacher Conferences
 11 - Veterans Day (full day of school)
 26-28 - Thanksgiving Recess

December (17)				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	*11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	*23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

11 - Professional Learning Day - *Early Dismissal
 23 - *Early Dismissal
 24 -31 - Holiday Vacation

January (19)				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

1 – New Year’s Day
 2 – Holiday Vacation
 19 - Martin Luther King Day

February (18)				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

13 – Professional Development Day
 16 - Presidents’ Day

March (22)				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	*26	27
30	31			

11, 12, 13 – Parent-Teacher Conferences
 26 - Professional Learning Day - *Early Dismissal

April (16)				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

3 - Good Friday
 13 - 17 – Spring Vacation

May (20)				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	*22
25	26	27	28	29

22 - Professional Learning Day - *Early Dismissal
 25 - Memorial Day

June (10)				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
◆15	◆16	◆17	◆18	◆19
◆22	◆23	24	25	26
29	30			

12 - Last Day for Students/Staff
 ◆15 - ◆23 - Snow/emergency days
 Two Last Days for Students - Early Dismissal

Inclement weather/emergency days will be made up on June 15th through June 23rd as needed. If more than 7 days are needed, days will be taken from spring vacation beginning with April 13th. The last day for students is expected to be no later than June 23rd. Students will not be in school more than 180 days. In the event that any of the teacher work days (10/3, 11/4 & 2/13) must be cancelled, it will be rescheduled for the same day of the week, one week later, and a student day will be added to the end of the school year.

Professional Learning Days – If the opening of school is delayed on a Professional Learning Day, the Professional Learning Day is cancelled, and students will be in school until regular dismissal time.

Approved by the Board of Education:
 12/19/24; rev. 2/7/25

District Calendar Update 2025-26

**New Fairfield Public Schools
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How do this winter's closures compare to historical trends?

2010-11 to 2025-26

Inclement weather closures (# days)

- Mean = 5.44
- Median = 6
- Mode = 6

- The most closures in one year was 13, which occurred in 2017-18.

2025-26

- 6 snow days
- 4 delayed openings

What are the CSDE's school year requirements and parameters?

- Instructional year must consist of at least **180 days** and **900 hours**.
- There is no minimum number of hours required for a day to count toward the 180 day requirement.
- Currently, CT school districts cannot shift to remote learning days.

What are the 25-26 school calendar implications?

- NFHS Graduation Ceremony: Friday, June 12
- NFMS Moving Up Ceremony: Friday, June 19
- Last day of school: Monday, June 22
- Last two days of school are early release days (6/19 & 6/22)

Budget Update 2026-27

**New Fairfield Public Schools
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Total Education Budget Breakdown

Expenditure	2025-26	2026-27	Inc/Dec	
Operating	44,118,404	46,397,778	2,279,374	
Medical	7,193,515	7,563,041	369,526	
Capital	510,000	623,000	113,000	
Debt Service	7,331,789	7,124,780	(207,009)	
Total	59,153,708	61,708,599	2,554,891	4.32%

Instruction

Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

The New Fairfield Board of Education (the “Board”), having consulted with the Superintendent of Schools for the New Fairfield Public Schools (the “District”), the District’s director of curriculum or a person in an equivalent position, and a librarian employed by the Board, adopts this Policy Regarding Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration in accordance with Connecticut law.

It is the policy of the Board to ensure that all District library materials maintained by the District are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Connecticut law, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Any school library media specialist or school library staff member who, in good faith, implements this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

The Board shall review this policy, and update it as necessary, every five years.

I. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

“**Individual with a vested interest**” means any school staff member employed by the Board, the parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed, and any student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed.

“**Library and other educational material**” means any material belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a District school library media center, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material, software and other material not required as part of classroom instruction.

“**Remove**” means deliberately taking library material out of a library's collection. The term “**remove**” does not include the process of clearing such collections of any materials that are no longer useful.

Instruction

Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

“**School library staff member**” means a school library media specialist, school librarian, any certificated or noncertificated staff member whose assignment is in the school library, or any individual carrying out or assisting with the functions of a school library media specialist or school librarian.

II. Library Collection Development and Maintenance

The Board recognizes that library and other educational material should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all students and should represent a wide range of viewpoints in the collection as a whole.

The Board requires that students have access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate material and shall provide access to library and other educational material that is relevant to the research, independent reading interests, and educational needs of students based on a student’s age, development, or grade level. The Board also recognizes the importance of the school library media center as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by students.

The Board acknowledges that a school library media specialist is professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides students with access to an array of age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

Staff, students, and families may submit verbal, electronic (email), or written requests for book titles or other library materials to the school's library media specialist for consideration in the collection; the library media specialist will give consideration to the request in the context of the Standards and collection development guidelines described in this policy.

The Board directs the Superintendent to establish a procedure by which a certified school library specialist will continually review library and other educational material within a school library media center using professionally accepted standards, which shall include, but need not be limited to, the material’s relevance, the physical condition of the material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate material, and continued demand for the material (the “Library Review Procedure”). The Library Review Procedure is attached hereto as Appendix A.

Instruction

Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

The Board directs the Superintendent to establish a procedure by which a certified school library specialist will continually review library and other educational material within a school library media center using professionally accepted standards, which shall include, but need not be limited to, the material's relevance, the physical condition of the material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate material, and continued demand for the material (the "Library Review Procedure"). The Library Review Procedure is attached hereto as Appendix A.

III. Library Displays and Programs

The Board recognizes that displays should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all students; represent a wide range of viewpoints; require student access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate content; and provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of students.

The Board further recognizes the importance of library displays and student programs as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by students.

The Board acknowledges that a school library media specialist is professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs that provide students with access to an array of age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

IV. Library Material Review and Reconsideration

The purpose of this policy section regarding library material review and reconsideration is to establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to challenge any District library and other educational material, display, or student program, as well as a process for the District to respond to any such challenges and related parameters. It is recognized that District staff make a good faith effort to provide multiple viewpoints. A collection, display, or some resources may be under development or in circulation at a given moment in time.

Instruction

Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

A. Standards for Reviewing Challenges to Library and Other Educational Material, Display, or Student Program

1. All library materials shall be evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Connecticut law, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Library and other educational material, displays, and student programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices, as adopted in this policy and/or any accompanying procedure for the continual review of library and educational material within a school library.
3. No library and other educational material, display, or program shall be removed from library media centers, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display, or program, or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display, or program. unless such material is not developmentally- or age-appropriate at a given school level based on CT State curriculum standards.
4. The removal, exclusion, or censoring of any book on the sole basis that a person with a vested interest finds such book offensive is prohibited.
5. Any process for an individual with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or student program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics.

B. Process for Challenging Library and Other Educational Material, Display, or Student Program

The Board establishes the following process for individuals with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or student program, as well as a process for the District to respond to any such challenges:

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Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

1. An individual with a vested interest may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form (the “Request Form”) to the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material, display, or student program is being challenged to initiate a review of such material. The Request Form is attached hereto as Appendix B.

Using the Request Form, an individual shall specify which portion or portions of such material the individual objects to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection. The individual submitting the Request Form must include the individual’s full legal name, address, and telephone number. If the individual who has submitted a Request Form is a parent or guardian, consideration of requests to reconsider and remove material, displays, or student programs shall be limited to the parents and guardians of students and eligible students currently enrolled in the school or District.

2. Upon receipt, the principal or the principal’s designee shall promptly forward the Request Form to the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee and communicate to the school’s Library Media Specialist.

3. The administration may consolidate any requests for review and reconsideration of the same challenged library and other educational material.

4. For each challenged library and other educational material, the Superintendent, or the Superintendent’s designee, shall appoint a Review Committee consisting of:

- a. the Superintendent, or the Superintendent’s designee;
- b. the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material is being challenged, or the principal’s designee;
- c. the director of curriculum, or a person in an equivalent position, employed by the Board;
- d. a representative from the Board;
- e. at least one grade-level-appropriate, certified teacher familiar with the library material, provided the teacher selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form;
- f. a parent or guardian of a student age thirteen years or younger enrolled in the District, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form;

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Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

- g. a parent or guardian of a student age fourteen years or older enrolled in the District, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form; and
- h. a certified school librarian employed by the Board or employed by another board of education in the state.

In cases where the request is submitted by a student enrolled in grades nine through twelve, and when appropriate and at the discretion of the Superintendent, a student enrolled in grades nine through twelve may serve on the Review Committee, provided the student selected is not the individual who submitted the Request for Reconsideration and the Superintendent consults with the principal of the school involved in such reconsideration request prior to making the determination whether to include the student on the Review Committee.

5. Any library and other educational material being challenged shall remain available in the school library media center according to such material's catalog record and be available for a student to reserve, check out, or access until a final decision is made by the Review Committee.
6. The Review Committee must evaluate the Request Form; read the challenged material in its entirety; evaluate the challenged material against this policy; and make a written decision on whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty (60) school days from the date the Request Form was received by the principal or the principal's designee. The Review Committee shall provide a copy of the committee's decision and report to the individual with a vested interest who submitted the Request Form and to the principal of the school.
7. The individual with a vested interest who submitted the Request Form may appeal the Review Committee's decision to the Board. The Board shall determine whether the reconsideration process was followed and communicate its decision to the individual.
8. Once a decision has been made by the Review Committee any library and other educational material, such material cannot be subject to a new request for review and reconsideration for a period of three (3) years.

Instruction

**Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and
Library Displays and Programs, and
Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy**

Legal References: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15c

Public Act No. 25-168, “An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2027, and Making Appropriations Therefore, and Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget.”

APPENDIX A

LIBRARY REVIEW PROCEDURE

Library Collection Development and Review Procedures

Collection development is an ongoing process undertaken by the school's library media specialist. It includes selecting library materials using the selection guidelines noted below, reviewing and removing materials from the collection as needed, and replacing lost and worn materials as needed.

When selecting library materials, District library media specialists take into account:

- Fiscal responsibility/budgetary constraints;
- Collection statistics as identified by data analyses, considering age of collection, suggested number of copies per student, and areas of need;
- Whether the informational need can be met by current database content and electronic subscriptions, aiming to leverage existing digital investments first;
- Alignment with curricular and cocurricular programs, district goals, and the District Vision of the Learner, in consultation with the instructional leadership and administrative teams as needed;
- Opportunities to enrich and support the curriculum and students as readers taking into consideration the various interests, abilities, learning styles and developmental levels of the students served. This includes ensuring that any new material uses language that is appropriate for the targeted grade range and developmental levels and whether the new material's treatment of difficult or sensitive subjects (e.g., death, mental health, violence, sexuality) is in a developmentally-appropriate way for the intended student audience;
- Consultation with professionally prepared resources (e.g., children's literature databases, School Library Journal, Kirkus, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), Voya, local, state, and national literary awards, etc.), to identify materials that meet evolving needs and remain current;
- Circulation history at District libraries to note emerging interests of students and staff;
- Requests of materials by staff, students, and faculty for educational, research, or literary purposes;

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- A commitment to providing multiple perspectives of an issue and a representative range of materials to reflect student experiences locally as well as the global community of our world;
- The library collection as a whole, with attention to gaps, redundancies, and emerging needs.

Books gifted to the school library will be evaluated according to these guidelines as well.

Systematic review and withdrawal of library materials that are no longer relevant or useful is necessary to maintain the quality of the collection and make efficient use of space. The Library/Media Specialist is responsible for this process and may confer with teaching staff and administration in questionable cases.

In the review and withdrawal of materials, the age of the material, use, alignment with curriculum, programming, learner interest, and physical condition will be taken into account. The following content guidance will be applied:

- A. Science, travel, geography, technical information (computer, fiber optics, etc.) more than five years from copyright date should be examined and replaced with more timely materials as budgets allow.
- B. Fiction that has not circulated for five years and is not recognized as having permanent value should be withdrawn.
- C. Superseded editions unless they contain unique materials (maps, bibliographies, charts, etc.) should be withdrawn.
- D. Duplicate copies of materials that were previously popular should be withdrawn.
- E. Obsolete, discredited, or unauthorized information should be withdrawn.
- F. Almanacs, yearbooks, etc., older than five years should be withdrawn. (*Decennial editions may be kept.*)

The physical condition of library materials may result in the withdrawal of some materials over time. Books with torn or ragged covers, yellowed pages, more than four pages missing, will be withdrawn unless contents are necessary and irreplaceable. (They may be repaired if possible.)

When items are removed from the collection, library media specialists will follow New Fairfield Board of Education policies to determine how to best reassign or discard materials.

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

This form may be used by an individual with a vested interest to challenge any library or other educational material, display, or student program in accordance with the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration policy. The form should be completed in its entirety and submitted to the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material are being challenged to initiate a review of such material.

Full Legal Name of Person Submitting Request:

Please note that the process for challenging any library and other educational material, display, or student program is available only to the following "individuals with a vested interest" as defined in the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration policy:

- any school staff member employed by the Board ("Staff Member"),
- the parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed ("Parent/Guardian"), and
- any student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed ("Student").

Referring to the definitions immediately above, please indicate your role by checking any or all of the following that apply. I am a:

_____ Staff Member _____ Parent/Guardian _____ Student

Address:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

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I have read the Board’s Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy: (check one)

- Yes
- No

I am requesting that the following library material(s), display(s), and/or student program(s) be reviewed:

I am requesting that this material be reviewed because I object to: (check one)

- The entire material
- A specific portion or portions of the material (identify portion(s) below)

I provide the following explanation of the reasons for my objection(s) stated above:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Received by:

Name: _____
School: _____
Date: _____