

FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 14, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colin Veitch, Erik Andersen, Donna McKenna, Brian Monroe, Stephanie Pickup, Kyle Bueno

STAFF PRESENT: Superintendent Tara Kohler, Assistant Superintendent Mark Balestracci, School Business Manager Nicole Potter, Sheri Souza

OTHERS PRESENT: Members of the community via Zoom, staff members Tracy Higgins, Michelle Souza, and Wendy Weidenfeller. Wayne Oliveira and Randall Durigan from GNBVT School Committee, Superintendent of GNBVT Michael Watson

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Veitch at 6:31 pm.

Roll Call of Committee Members: Mr. Andersen, Ms. Pickup, Mr. Bueno, Mr. Monroe, Ms. McKenna, Mr. Veitch

Mrs. Kohler introduced staff members Tracy Higgins, Michelle Souza, and Wendy Weidenfeller who will be speaking on the Literacy Initiative. She also introduced Wayne Oliveira and Randy Durigan from GNBVT School Committee, Superintendent of GNBVT Michael Watson

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve regular session minutes from May 24, 2023 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved, unanimously (6-0).

Motion to approve executive session minutes from May 24, 2023 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Bueno, approved, unanimously (6-0).

Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent:

Mrs. Kohler stated there is an item that came in under the 48 hours notice that will need to be addressed later tonight regarding the Middle School roof. She asked it be considered as new business. The Committee agreed.

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical School (GNBVT) School Committee Representatives Wayne Oliveira and Randy Durigan, and Superintendent Mike Watson to Discuss Mutual Topics Between the Committees:

Mrs. Kohler introduced GNBVT School Committee representatives Wayne Oliveira and Randy Durigan along with GNBVT Superintendent Mike Watson, who presented a four minute video to the Committee that markets their school to upcoming potential applicants. Mr. Oliveira noted they were there tonight as a meet and greet. They would like to collaborate and focus on working together in the future to benefit Fairhaven students. Mr. Watson addressed the committee stating it is important to connect with each committee member as well as members of the administration and form a great partnership to support the kids and families of Fairhaven.. Mr. Watson addressed questions and comments from the committee regarding the application process, what it entails and how it's evolving. He also touched briefly upon the After Dark program, which currently allows Juniors from New Bedford High School to take carpentry at GNBVT from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm every school day while continuing their academics at New Bedford High. They will receive their High School diploma from New Bedford with a Chapter 74 certification in carpentry from GNBVT. The Committee is eager to learn more about the program and possibly offer it to Fairhaven High School students in the future. Mr. Watson was open to discussing this possibility going forward.

Discussion ensued about GNBVT policies and procedures.

Update Regarding District Literacy Initiative:

Mrs. Kohler introduced Assistant Principal and Coordinator of Teaching & Learning Tracy Higgins, Title I Interventionist Michelle Souza, and East Fairhaven Elementary Principal Wendy Weidenfeller noting they met with our Literacy Consultant yesterday and she was able to show how our District was doing through the years prior to Covid. Mrs. Higgins presented data showing the different levels of proficiency in grades Kindergarten through 3 and into 6 (Attachment A). She was excited to show they have performed well above the 2021 goals. Mrs. Kohler noted that this was funded through the Title I grant and enabled them to have a much more targeted approach. Mrs. Higgins stated they are not just working with students that might need additional support, they are also able to enrich the high flyers as well. The students have multiple assessments, checking on them throughout the process so they can adjust practices as needed. There will be a Summer Boost program working with incoming Kindergarten, as well as grades 1 through 3, serving approximately 50 families. It was reiterated they are able to help the students moving into their next grade in a proactive manner. The Committee commended the program and thanked Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Weidenfeller, and Mrs. Souza for their tenacity with this program.

Fairhaven High School Proposed Blue Devil Block:

Mrs. Kohler asked the Committee to table this discussion. The program does not follow the current contract language and will need to be negotiated to proceed. Committee agreed to table.

Staffing Update:

Mrs. Kohler presented staffing data to the Committee (Attachment B) noting we have a lot of very qualified candidates coming in since the last update. She is excited to have currently hired a Physics Teacher as well as an Assistant Principal for Fairhaven High School. Mrs. Kohler also stated Mr. Balestracci was diligent and instrumental in recruiting and outreach. Mr. Balestracci explained to the Committee his process of attending job fairs at the Massachusetts Education Recruiting Consortium (MERC), UMass Dartmouth Spring Hiring Fair, and Bridgewater State University Education Career Fair. Fairhaven Public Schools also advertised on School Spring, the Standard Times, and Indeed.com. Mrs. Kohler also noted there is a possibility of our Paraprofessional's that have a degree may have an easier road to becoming SPED teachers. The MA Commissioner stated this is a possible item that will go in front of the Board next week. Mrs. Kohler spoke to a few of our current Para's regarding interest if the item passes.

Superintendent Evaluation:

Mr. Veitch read the Committee's accumulative results of the Superintendent Evaluation (Attachment C).

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Budget Options:

Mrs. Kohler gave her formal recommendation regarding the possible budget cuts to be made due to the override not passing. The first recommendation is waiting a year on possibly charging for transportation because it will take a lot of clerical and administrative resources to make this a viable option, along with the fact it may pose possible safety issues. She is recommending offsetting this with preschool costs. There is a revolving account with preschool tuition, this will help with \$50,000 for transportation. \$20,000 in District Leadership Operations can be cut.. \$40,000 out of Instructional Technology as well as cutting the Middle School Athletics. As well as not fill the Art position that is currently vacant at the Middle School. Currently, the Elementary Schools have two secretaries each. This can possibly be reduced to one in each building with one shared between both buildings. It's possible we can offset this through Esser for a year, housing at the Family Center. Will have to look at the grant details. Also, the High School Principal Secretary has been vacant for a year, so this leaves an opportunity for a trickle effect and no one being left out of a job. The Payroll Clerk at the Administrative Center is leaving and we are working on creating systems with the Town Hall, and if those work well, we could not fill this position. The Committee commented on the recommendations. Mrs. Kohler also stated she will start the conversation regarding staff changes with the Union tomorrow.

Upcoming Events:

Motion was made to cancel the June 28, 2023 School Committee Meeting by Mr. Bueno, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved, unanimously (6-0)

Next meeting: August 23, 2023

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Veitch did a second read of the Policy KHB: Advertising in Schools (Attachment D). Motion was made to accept the KHB: Advertising in Schools policy by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mr. Bueno, approved, unanimously (6-0).

Mr. Veitch did a second read of the Policy of IHBG: Home Schooling (Attachment E). Mr. Balestracci stated they had the policy subcommittee meeting last week, there are two options to this policy, both complying with MARC. Policy one does not allow homeschooled students to participate in extracurricular activities, and option two will allow homeschooled students to participate in extracurricular activities.. The committee discussed the two options, noting option two may bring legal ramifications. Mr. Bueno made a motion to adopt option one of the IHBG: Home Schooling policy, seconded by Mrs. McKenna. Mr. Anderson motioned to adopt option two of the IHBG: Home Schooling policy, Ms. Pickup seconded. Mr. Bueno, Mr. Monroe, Mr. Veitch, Ms. McKenna all voted for option one, Mr. Anderson and Ms. Pickup voted for option two. Option one of the IHBG: Home Schooling policy passed (4-2).

New Business:

Motion made to accept a donation from the Fairhaven Alumni Association for the Fairhaven High School Knipe Auditorium curtain (Attachment D) made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved, unanimously (6-0).

Motion made to accept a donation of \$1,000 from BiWeekly Grind, LLC for 2023 scholarships made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Bueno, approved, unanimously (6-0).

Motion made to award the contract to Cemat Contracting Inc., as the lowest bidder at \$92,235, for the concrete for the Fairhaven High School Storage Facility made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Anderson, approved, unanimously (6-0).

Motion made to appoint the Committee Chair as Signator during the summer months made by Mr. Bueno, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved (6-0).

Motion made to authorize the Superintendent to negotiate and execute the OPM Contract for Phase I of the Fairhaven High School Historical Restoration Project by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Anderson, approved (6-0).

Motion made to authorize the Superintendent to award the notice to proceed the contract for the Elizabeth Hastings Middle School Roof project by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Bueno, approved (6-0).

Questions from Individual Committee Members:

Ms. McKenna offered to be a second signator if it is needed in the summer.

Ms. Pickup asked if the teachers are allowed to use Donors Choose. Mrs. Kohler stated we technically do not like to use it. The teachers typically have received the things that they need for the classroom and when they want new things we have done that through grants. Mrs. Kohler recommended it to go to the Policy Subcommittee for discussion. Ms. Pickup concurred and asked that a policy for Donors Choose be created.

Motion to adjourn and enter in Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to a legal issue and the deployment of security personnel, not returning into regular session made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Ms. McKenna, roll call vote: Mr. Anderson yes, Ms. Pickup yes, Mr. Bueno yes, Mr. Monroe yes, Mrs. McKenna yes, Mr. Veitch yes, approved, unanimously (6-0).

Adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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Attachments:

- A. Literacy Data
- B. Staffing Update Presentation
- C. Superintendent Evaluation
- D. KHB: Advertising in School Policy
- E. IHBG: Home Schooling Policies
- F. Knipe Auditorium Curtain Photos

Tara M. Kohler
Secretary to the School Committee
Fairhaven Public Schools

Approved August 23, 2023

Early Literacy @ FPS
End of Year Report 2023

EAST

EOY Proficiency

	2021	2022	2023
K	75%	67%	53%
1	57%	63%	63%
2	63%	85%	86%
3			88%

CARRIETHURSTON

Changing the Status Quo in Schools

WOOD

EOY Proficiency

	2021	2022	2023
K	81%	83%	75%
1	77%	81%	92%
2	79%	75%	81%
3			87%

CARRIETHURSTON

Changing the Status Quo in Schools

EHMS Grade 6

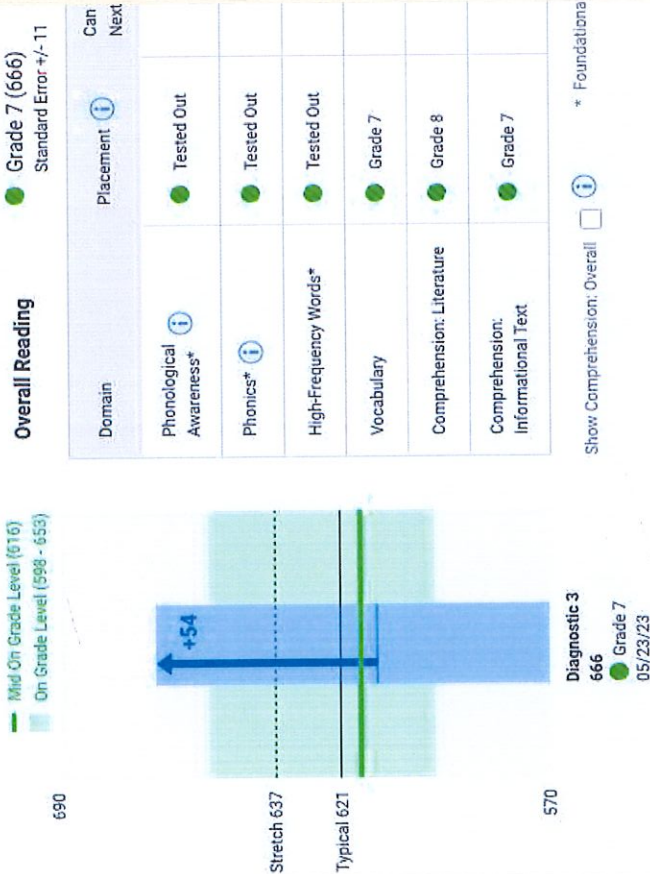
Identified 20 Students below grade level using iReady reading assessment and MCAS data

Worked with three ELA teachers and one Special Education teacher

Targeted instruction in Phonological Awareness and Comprehension

Following slides show highlights of growth

Typical = 19 points



Typical = 9 points

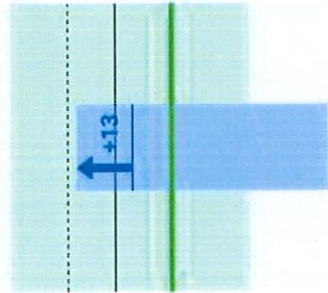


Overall Reading Mid 6 (638) Standard Error +/- 1

Domain	Placement
Phonological Awareness*	Tested Out
Phonics*	Tested Out
High-Frequency Words*	Tested Out
Vocabulary	Mid 6
Comprehension: Literature	Grade 8
Comprehension: Informational Text	Mid 6

Show Comprehension: Overall * Foundational

Mid On Grade Level (616)
On Grade Level (598 - 653)



Stretch 640

Typical 629

580

Diagnostic 3
638 Mid 6
05/23/23

Typical = 4 points

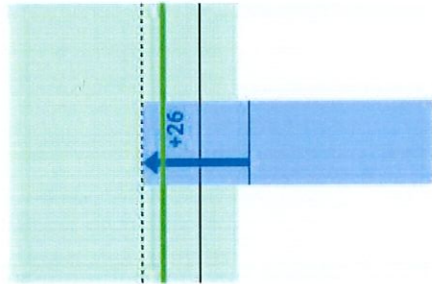
Typical = 12 points

Overall Reading Mid 6 (621) Standard Error +/- 1

Domain	Placement
Phonological Awareness*	Tested Out
Phonics*	Tested Out
High-Frequency Words*	Tested Out
Vocabulary	Mid 6
Comprehension: Literature	Late 6
Comprehension: Informational Text	Grade 5

Show Comprehension: Overall * Foundational

Mid On Grade Level (616)
On Grade Level (598 - 653)



Stretch 621

Typical 607

550

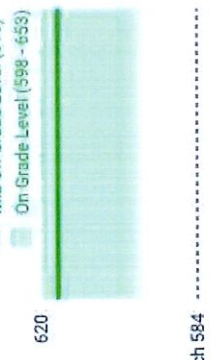
Diagnostic 3
621 Mid 6
05/23/23

Mid On Grade Level (616)
On Grade Level (598 - 653)

Late 6 (650)
Standard Error +/-1

Overall Reading

Domain	Placement
Phonological Awareness*	Tested Out
Phonics*	Tested Out
High-Frequency Words*	Tested Out
Vocabulary	Grade 7
Comprehension: Literature	Grade 8
Comprehension: Informational Text	Early 6

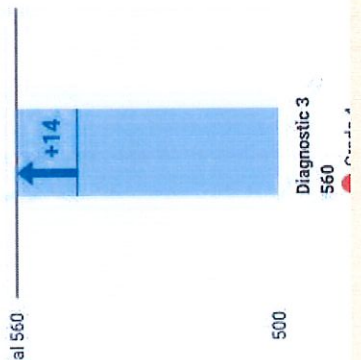


Diagnostic 3
650
Late 6
05/23/23

Grade 4 (560)
Standard Error +/-1

Overall Reading

Domain	Placement
Phonological Awareness*	Tested Out
Phonics*	Tested Out
High-Frequency Words*	Tested Out
Vocabulary	Grade 4
Comprehension: Literature	Grade 4
Comprehension: Informational Text	Grade 5



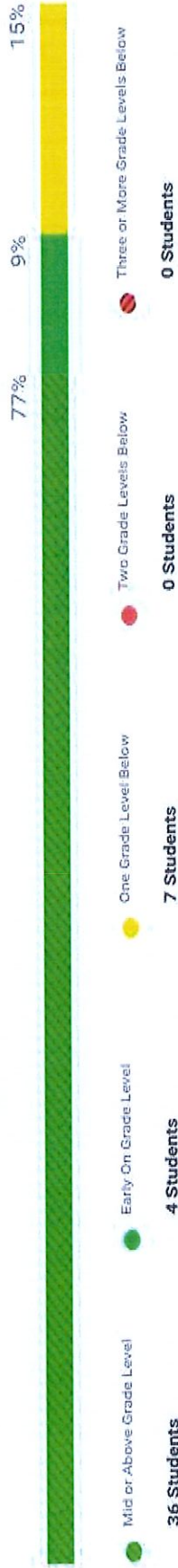
Diagnostic 3
560
Grade 4

Show Comprehension: Overall * Foundational

EAST GRADE 1 - IREADY EOY

Overall Placement

Students Assessed/Total: 47/51



[i The Mapping Between 5-Level and 3-Level Placements](#)

EAST GRADE 2 - IREADY EOY

Overall Placement

Students Assessed/Total: 41/43



[i The Mapping Between 5-Level and 3-Level Placements](#)

EAST GRADE 3 - IREADY EOY

Overall Placement

Students Assessed/Total: 43/43

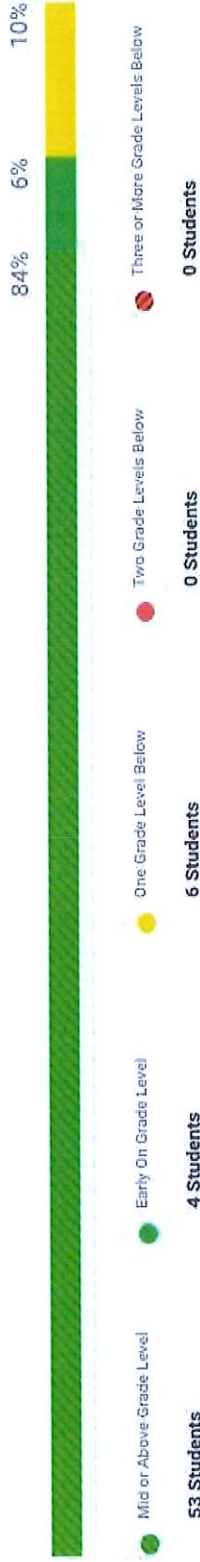


[i The Mapping Between 5-Level and 3-Level Placements](#)

WOOD GRADE 1 - IREADY EOY

Overall Placement

Students Assessed/Total: 63/63



[i The Mapping Between 5-Level and 3-Level Placements](#)

WOOD GRADE 2 - IREADY EOY

Overall Placement

Students Assessed/Total: 74/74



- Mid or Above Grade Level: 47 Students
 - Early On Grade Level: 9 Students
 - One Grade Level Below: 14 Students
 - Two Grade Levels Below: 4 Students
 - Three or More Grade Levels Below: 0 Students
- [i The Mapping Between 5-Level and 3-Level Placements](#)

WOOD GRADE 3 - IREADY EOY

Overall Placement

Students Assessed/Total: 79/79



- Mid or Above Grade Level: 53 Students
 - Early On Grade Level: 17 Students
 - One Grade Level Below: 7 Students
 - Two Grade Levels Below: 2 Students
 - Three or More Grade Levels Below: 0 Students
- [i The Mapping Between 5-Level and 3-Level Placements](#)

What about students reading below grade level?

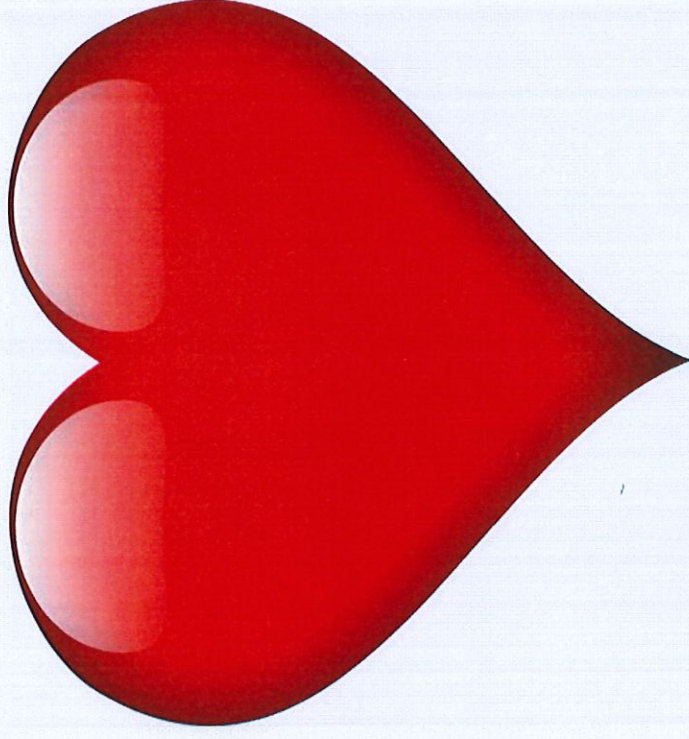
Our work allows us the data to identify exactly where students are in their reading and use a variety of instructional strategies and supports to move these students in the fall of 2023. We have already held data meetings at each school and will pass information about the students from this year's teacher to next year's.

We will reach out to families with information about summer programming.

We will meet with teachers early in the year to make sure they have what they need to help students achieve accelerated growth and shorten the grade level gap.

PAUSE TO APPRECIATE

Our Teachers & Paraprofessionals



Grades K - 3 @ East and Wood

Grade 6 ELA @ EHMS

Moving Forward (from 2021 presentation)

Continue the work with a heightened and educated focus on supporting all students.

Work with a clear progression for our phonics and phonemic awareness instruction.

Commit to a consistent cycle of short quick assessments in addition to our beginning, middle, and end of year benchmark assessment to ensure our students' instructional needs are met.

Provide resources and professional development aligned to the progression.

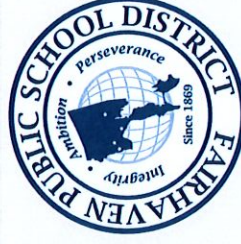
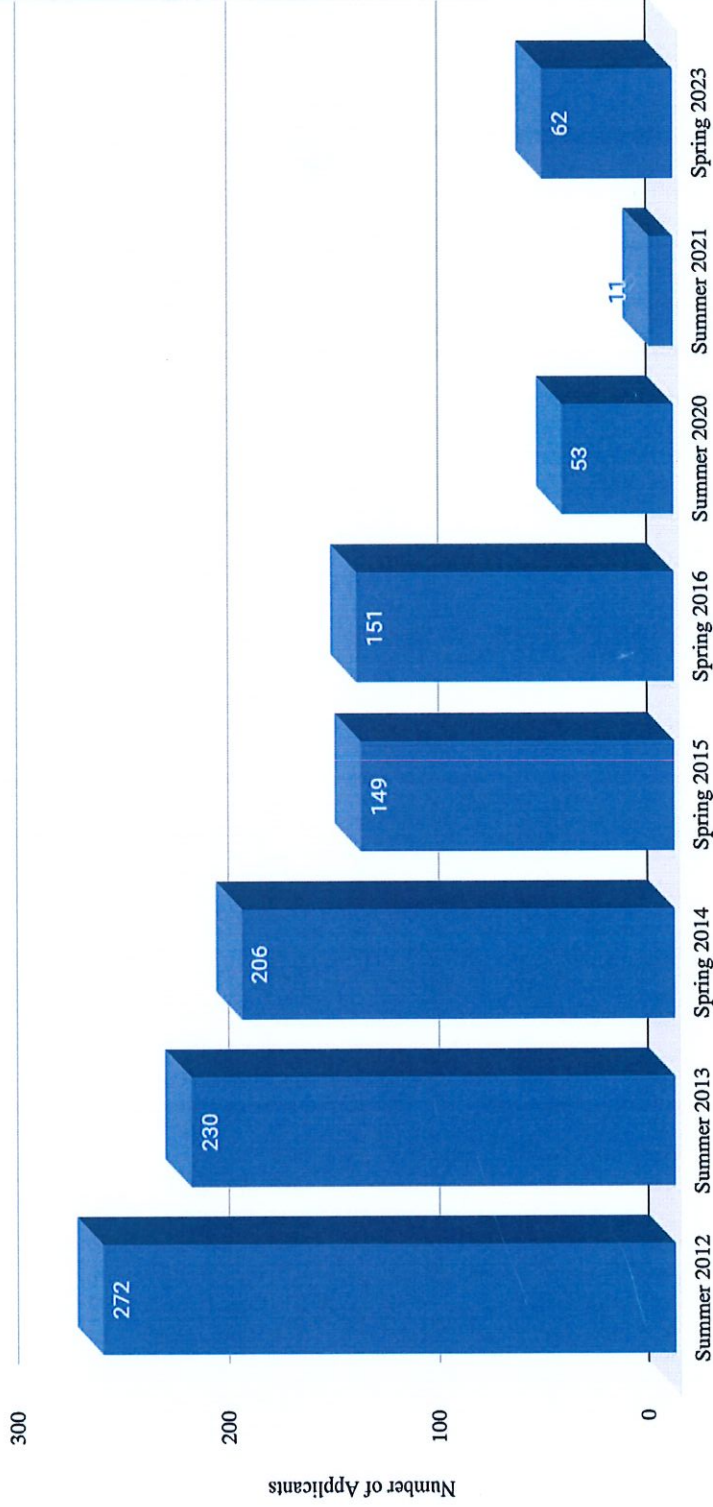
FPS Staffing Update

June 14, 2023



Trends from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023

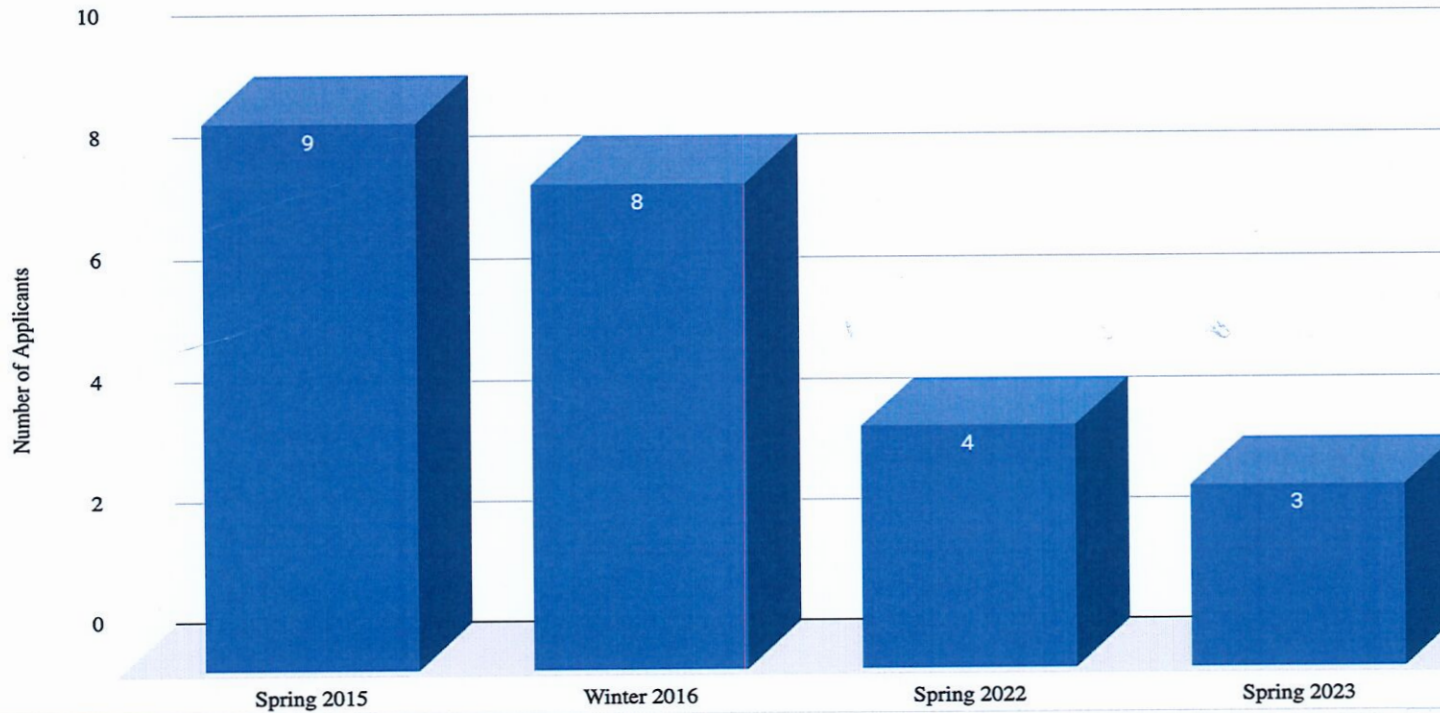
Elementary Teacher



Trends from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023

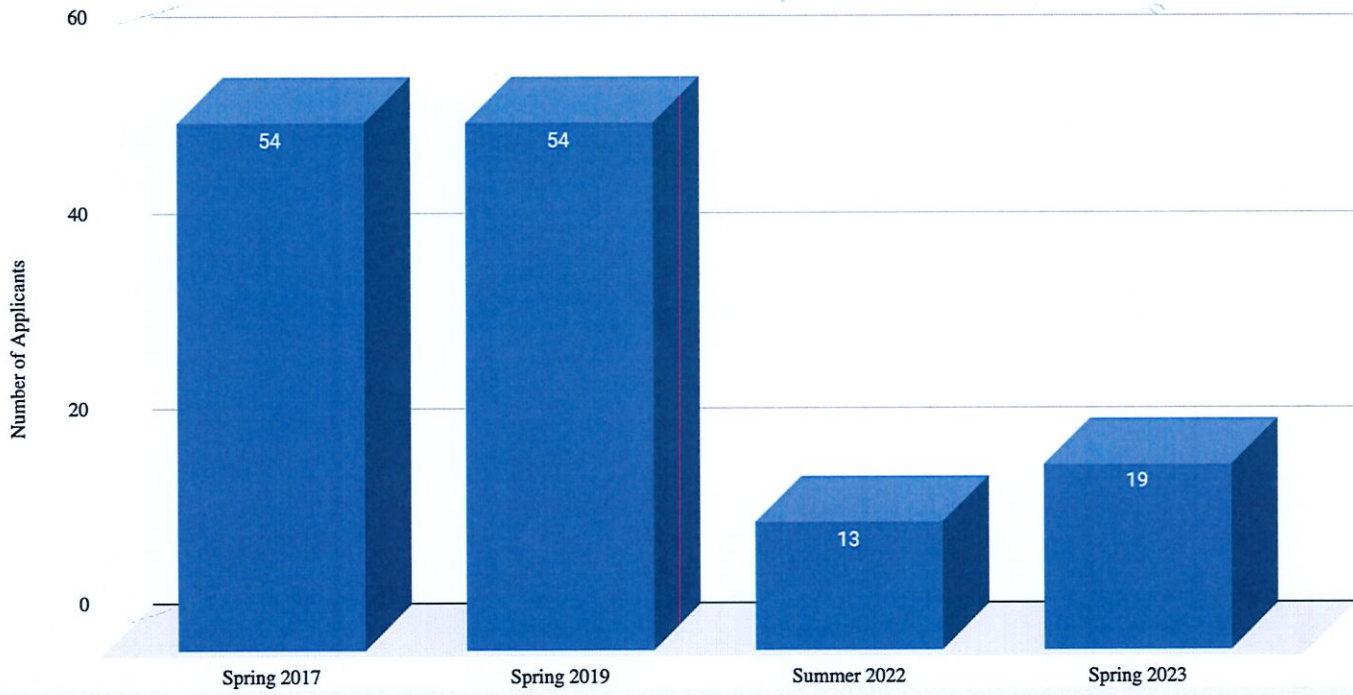
Physics Teacher - FHS

(Filled May 2023)



Trends from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023

Assistant Principal - FHS



Recruitment and Outreach

FPS had representation at the following Job Fairs

- Massachusetts Education Recruiting Consortium (MERC)
- UMASS Dartmouth Spring Hiring Fair
- Bridgewater State University Education Career Fair

****FPS Advertised vacancies on School Spring, the Standard Times, and Indeed.com****



Superintendent Evaluation

Progress Toward Goals: Solidly Met All Three Goals

Goal examples being Management Operations, Instructional Leadership, College & Career Culture, Climate Communication, and Student Engagement. Broken down into three categories of Professional Practice, Student Learning, & District Improvement Goals.

Assess Performance on the Standards: Overall Proficient

Standard I: Instructional Leadership: Overall proficient

Standard II: Management Operations: Exemplary

Standard III: Family & Community Engagement: Proficient

Standard IV: Professional Culture: Exemplary

Comments:

The continued growth of the Family Center and after school activities are areas of achievement as well as overseeing the collaborative project with New Bedford Voc-Tech in the building of the Fairhaven High School storage shed. It's continuing to build and strengthen each for the betterment of not just Fairhaven students, but our community.

Tara and the Leadership Team have done a remarkable job moving our Fairhaven Public Schools forward.

Tara's strengths: Active listening, empathy, and fostering strategic relationships helps parents, teachers, faculty, and staff feel valued.

Fairhaven Public Schools are known for their exceptional services, programs, and academics for all students and families to use.

Mrs. Kohler is a leader of great character and integrity. She has a passion for ensuring all students have a high quality education based on high standards. Overall she has done a good job leading the school district. Efforts have been hampered by the latent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide staffing shortages. She has done an amazing job navigating complicated legal and human resource issues.

Areas for continued improvement are communication and engagement, that being said Mrs. Kohler has continues to press forward. The District is gaining a solid footing and continued positive growth. Tara is a great leader for our District, she has shown that consistently as our Assistant Superintendent and as our Superintendent.

Mrs. Kohler has exceeded our expectations of management and operations, taking over the School District at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic while dealing with nationwide staffing changes which was not an easy task. She has had to navigate complicate legal human resources issues in the short time as Superintendent and has done all this with exceptional grace.

File: KHB

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

No advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds or properties without the prior approval of the School Committee in accordance with the following standards.. Approval shall be determined based on:

1. The appropriateness of the location for the advertising.
2. Whether the advertising is consistent with the values, goals, and education purposes of the school district.
3. No approval shall be granted for advertising that by word, symbol, or representation promotes the sale or use of services involving alcohol, tobacco, or drugs of any kind; that promotes political parties or campaigns; that promotes sexual activity, associated products, or explicit materials of a sexual nature; or that denigrates or exploits any individual or group.

The School Committee shall determine the terms and conditions under which the specific advertising shall be approved and shall enter into a memorandum of agreement with the advertising entity specifying such terms and conditions, including any charges to be imposed for the advertising and the purpose and expenditure of the funds realized, consistent with the applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Publications of the school system will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in student publications that are published by student organizations, subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially-sponsored, free teaching aids, if the content is approved by the administration. Such approval shall not be inconsistent with the standards set forth above.

Solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school system to promote any product will not be permitted by the Committee.

SOURCE: MASC

Enacted / /2023

File: IHBG

HOME SCHOOLING

The Massachusetts General Laws require the School Committee to determine that a Home Schooling program meets the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for their child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from the District's public schools:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the District, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program. The applicable form is attached to this Policy as Exhibit A.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may include:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents/guardian to teach the children,
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents/guardian.
4. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student, with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if they have satisfied the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education's competency requirements and have met the District's educational standards for graduation.

Because access to the District's extra-curricular programs and activities by a child in a home-based educational program is not required by law, children who are in such programs will not be granted access to District extra-curricular programs and activities.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69: 1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles

Care and Protection of Charles - 399 Mass. 324 (1987)

File: IHBG - HOME SCHOOLING

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3. The textbooks, workbooks, and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents/guardian.
4. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2023

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles

Care and Protections of Charles - MASS. Supreme Judicial Court 399 Mass. 324 (1987)

