

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Policy Committee Minutes
Tuesday, March 15, 2022
5:00 PM

In Attendance:

Mr. Michael Cummings, Ms. Courtney LeBorious, Ms. Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Ms. Jennifer Jacobsen, Ms. Carol Guernsey, Mr. Bob Smoler – FEA President, Mr. Steve Baker – PTA Council President, Ms. Katie Flynn – PTA Council President-Elect, Ms. Kristen Hardiman.

Call to Order – Ms. Maxon-Kennelly called meeting to order at 5:01pm.

Approval of March 1, 2022 meeting minutes – approved with changes; 3–0 vote.

Policy:

Discussion – Grading Policy

Mr. Cummings distributed a draft of the grading policy worked on by school staff at the meeting held March 14, 2022. Mr. Cummings stated he directed questions to the group around the five topics discussed at the last policy meeting. Mr. Cummings stated there is still work to be done on the draft especially on the subject of retakes. Mr. Cumming stated the group did not discuss the subject of cumulative grading yet; however, they will tackle that subject in their next meeting.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked Mr. Cummings about extra credit language. Mr. Cummings stated the school staff group did not feel extra credit language was needed in the grading policy since the policy will have language about retakes.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the timeline for the group’s next meeting. Mr. Cummings stated he emailed the group today to schedule another meeting. Mr. Cummings will let Ms. Maxon-Kennelly know the date of the next grading policy committee meeting.

In reference to item #1, first bullet point, Ms. Guernsey stated she would like the language, “part of larger task”, defined. Ms. Guernsey also stated she had questions about the “10 school days” language in the second bullet of item #1. Mr. Cummings responded saying the “10 school days” is the standard language used.

In reference to item #1, second bullet point, Ms. Jacobsen stated she would like the language to include the word “within” or “by” 10 school days. Ms. Jacobsen also stated she would like the language in the policy to be easily understood by the public so that it meets public purpose.

In reference to item #3, Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated she would like to make sure this happens. Ms. Guernsey asked Mr. Cummings what the word “uncharacteristic” means in this item. Mr. Cummings responded by giving an example of a student who normally achieves B grades drops to a C grade. That would be “uncharacteristic” of the student’s prior performance.

In reference to item #4, third bullet point which pertains to behavioral characteristics, Ms. Jacobsen stated that sentence appears to be “floating out there” and does not belong in that section.

In reference to item # 5, Ms. Guernsey stated homework due dates should be related to the class time and meeting time. Mr. Cummings stated one of the issues, without infringing on weekends and holidays, is the students who have practice or work after school. Mr. Cummings asked, “Are we limiting their submission time?”

In reference to item #6, letter (a), Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked why these items were listed. Mr. Smoler responded saying the group included them as a definition of “summative”.

In reference to item #6, letter (b), Ms. Jacobsen questioned the language in that section. Mr. Cummings stated the group was concerned about setting a ceiling limit. Mr. Smoler stated setting a maximum could be problematic. Mr. Smoler also stated there should be a minimum number of assessments so that students are not being graded on just two assignments, for example. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated she objects to only one summative a quarter.

In reference to item #6, letter (c), Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked why formative assessments are not referenced in this section. Mr. Cummings stated the group is still working on this item.

In reference to item #7, Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated she has mixed feelings about retakes replacing a grade and requested clarity on this item. Ms. Jacobsen agreed that retakes should not completely replace the initial grade.

In reference to item #9, third bullet point, Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated she is opposed to students receiving a grade of 50 to replace a grade of zero. Mr. Cummings stated the group felt that zero grades are demoralizing. Mr. Cummings stated teachers are concerned about students giving up on themselves, particularly students who do not have supports at home and/or students who cannot stay after school for extra help. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated she cannot support giving the grade of a 50 when the student does nothing even though the grade of 50 is still a failing grade. Ms. Jacobsen stated she does not understand the concept of doing nothing and getting a grade of a 50. Ms. Guernsey stated she is interested in seeing the data on the students who will be impacted by the zero to 50 grades. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly agreed she would like to see the raw material on this as well. Mr. Cummings stated he will work with the group drafting the policy to design a question that gets this information.

Discussion – 3280 Gifts, Grants & Bequests

Ms. LeBorious stated she extracted the GRANTS policy to a separate policy since it deals with different items. Ms. LeBorious also stated she did not include the regulations since she wanted to work on the policy first.

Ms. LeBorious recommended some language changes to the draft she provided. Ms. Jacobsen requested clarification on the definition of a “gift”.

APPROVED 4/5/2022

Ms. LeBorious asked the committee if they would like the definitions included in the policy. The committee agreed the definitions page should be included in the policy.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly and Ms. LeBorious will meet before the next Policy Committee meeting to discuss a draft of the Gifts and Bequests policy.

Discussion – 3280.1 Grants

There was no discussion on this topic due to shortness of meeting time.

Discussion – 5118 Non-Resident School Attendance

Mr. Cummings stated this policy is still being looked at by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is specifically looking at the Tuition and Fees Calculation page. Mr. Cummings will report back to the committee once he hears from the Finance Committee.

Ms. Guernsey asked Mr. Cummings if the Finance Committee was open to having this revised policy in place. Mr. Cummings acknowledged the Finance Committee is interested in the change to this policy.

Open Discussion/Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.

Adjournment – Ms. Maxon-Kennelly adjourned the meeting at 6:46pm.