

APPROVED May 3, 2022

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 5, 2022
5:00 PM

In Attendance:

Mr. Michael Cummings (until 6:23pm), Dr. James Zavodjancik (until 6:54pm), Ms. Courtney LeBorious (until 6:23pm), Ms. Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Ms. Jennifer Jacobsen, Ms. Carol Guernsey, Mr. Paul Cavanna (until 6:23pm), Mr. Bob Smoler – FEA President (until 6:23pm), Ms. Katie Flynn – PTA Council President-Elect, Ms. Kristen Hardiman.

Call to Order – Ms. Maxon-Kennelly called meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

Approval of March 15, 2022 meeting minutes – approved by 3-0 vote.

Policy:

Discussion – Grading Policy

Mr. Cummings distributed a summary of topics discussed at the grading committee meeting held that morning at the high school. Mr. Cummings stated the large staff group broke up into smaller groups for topic discussions.

Mr. Cummings stated there is some concern with staff members about the 10-day turnaround time for grades. Mr. Cummings also stated the grading committee put off discussion on the topic of zero-grading to a later time because it is a larger issue that needs to be addressed. Mr. Cummings stated the grading committee staff has strong opinions that professional development must be done with all staff on the topic of grading to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Mr. Smoler stated the grading committee discussed some great ideas which need to be vetted and solidified before being reviewed by the Policy Committee.

Mr. Cavanna stated the first three bullets of Mr. Cummings's handout address the Policy Committee's concerns about consistency. Mr. Cavanna also stated the bottom two bullets, "Reassessment of Learning" and "Cumulative Grading", need staff support before implementation. Mr. Cavanna stressed the need to have staff on board with those topics so there is not a "bad roll-out" of those two topics. Mr. Cavanna agreed with Mr. Cummings that the subject of zero-grading needs to be discussed at a later time.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked Mr. Cavanna how the staff felt about this grading policy. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked if a survey of staff had been completed. Mr. Cummings stated no survey has been done; however, there is recognition from the staff that consistency is an area of concern.

Mr. Smoler stated the staff has concerns about the 8 minimum assessments and 10-day turnaround time for posting grades; however, staff understands these need to be done. Mr. Smoler also stated that staff wants to make sure the Policy Committee is mindful of putting in place in-depth assessments that challenge a student.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked Mr. Cummings if the topic of formative assessments was discussed with the grading committee. Mr. Cummings stated the topic was discussed and the group came up with different definitions. Mr. Cavanna added part of the group's conversation was about getting the formative assessments returned before the summative assessments.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated she would like formative assessments addressed further. Mr. Cummings stated teachers have differences of opinion on how formative and summative assessments are defined because they are interpreted differently.

Mr. Maxon-Kennelly asked if the subject of test corrections was discussed with the grading committee. Mr. Cummings stated the topic of test corrections was discussed; however, the grading committee would like to go back to the faculty for more feedback.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the proposed professional development idea to address the zero to fifty grading concepts. Mr. Cummings stated the grading committee does not feel that people understand the concept of zero to fifty grading which is why professional development is needed.

Ms. Guernsey stated she thinks the Policy Committee's goals are not attainable as they first thought they would be. Ms. Guernsey also stated she has concerns about the 10-day turnaround time for grades. Ms. Guernsey stated she is not clear on the definition of a formative assessment.

Mr. Smoler responded to Ms. Guernsey by explaining that formative assessments do not always need to be graded. Mr. Smoler gave the example of a teacher looking at student work and providing feedback to that student. Mr. Smoler explained that is an example of a formative assessment which is not graded. Mr. Smoler continued by giving another example of a formative assessment, such as a lengthy assignment, which would be graded. Mr. Smoler explained the intent of a formative assessment is to give the teacher an idea of what the student knows and does not know on the subject.

Ms. Cavanna stated the grading committee focused more on the summative assessments than the formative assessments since they are the bigger ticket item. Mr. Cummings explained that formative assessments are so informal it is difficult to put a number onto them.

Ms. Guernsey asked about getting data on the zero-grading topic. Mr. Cummings stated the Information Technology department is working on pulling the data and needed more time to compile the results.

Ms. Guernsey asked about the timeline on the grading policy. Mr. Cummings stated part of the staff professional development day in May will be discussing the grading policy. Mr. Cummings stated all of the items above the last bulleted item on his handout will be ready for next school year. Ms. Guernsey asked Mr. Cummings if any of these items are problematic. Mr. Cummings responded that he does not feel these items will be problematic to implement.

Ms. Jacobsen requested the language in the first bullet point, second item be changed to "Non-core courses" instead of "Elective course".

Ms. Jacobsen stated she does not want a grading policy set which focuses on the exceptions rather than focusing on the normal. Ms. Jacobsen stated she would like a grading policy that is

geared toward the normal and allows flexibility to deal with the exceptions or special circumstances.

Ms. Jacobsen questioned the bullet labeled, “Reassessment of learning - minimum number of opportunities per course”. Ms. Jacobsen requested expansion on this topic as well as cumulative grading. Ms. Jacobsen expressed frustration that the committee is stuck on this topic. Mr. Smoler stated the grading committee has made progress, albeit small progress.

Discussion – 5118 Non-Resident School Attendance

Mr. Cummings stated he does not have an update on this agenda item. This policy is still being discussed/reviewed with the Finance Committee.

Discussion – Challenging Curriculum

Dr. Zavodjancik stated the draft of this policy is still with CABA. CABA is waiting for districts to complete a survey and then they will finish their draft based on the survey results. Dr. Zavodjancik stated he met with the Guidance Counselors to review the draft guidance for this policy. Dr. Zavodjancik stated the counselors did not see many items that need to be changed. Dr. Zavodjancik stated the counselors, collectively, would like to see more partnerships for career pathways.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked for data from the middle school level to see how many students are taking high school level courses or have taken these courses in the past.

Discussion – 3280 Gifts, Grants & Bequests

Ms. LeBoriosis stated she provided the definition of a “gift” which the committee asked for during the previous meeting. Ms. Jacobsen stated the information provided on this policy, as well as the Fund Raising and Booster Clubs policies, is overburdensome and unclear. Ms. Jacobsen requested these policies be streamlined.

Discussion – 1324 Fund Raising

Ms. Jacobsen asked if item #II, Rules Governing Fundraising Activities, letter (d), should include language about fund raising using social media.

Discussion – 1230 Booster Clubs

Ms. Jacobsen asked Ms. LeBoriosis if any proactive action has been taken with booster clubs on this policy and other organizations. Ms. Jacobsen stated she would like to ensure everyone is kept in the loop on this policy. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly stated everyone will be in the loop once this policy is closer to a final draft which should be after the May 3rd policy meeting.

Open Discussion/Public Comment –

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Ms. Katie. Flynn – President-Elect for PTA Council, asked the committee members, “What is the intent or what you are trying to prevent with the language on page #10, item b, section ii?” Ms. Flynn stated she feels this sentence is too descriptive and is not practicable.

Adjournment - Ms. Maxon-Kennelly adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.