

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Special Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 11, 2022
5:00 PM
501 Kings Highway East

In Attendance:

Ms. Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Ms. Carol Guernsey, Ms. Jennifer Jacobsen, Dr. Stephen Tracy, Dr. Zakia Parrish (left at 6:55pm), Dr. James Zavodjancik (left at 6:55pm), Dr. Greg Hatzis (left at 6:00pm), Mr. Paul Cavanna (left at 6:00pm), Ms. Nancy Byrnes (left at 6:26pm), Mr. Robert Mancusi (left at 6:06pm), Ms. Courtney LeBorious (arrived at 6:56pm), Ms. Kristen Hardiman

Call to Order – Ms. Maxon-Kennelly called meeting to order at 5:03pm.

Approval of September 13, 2022 meeting minutes – Approved by a 3-0 vote.

Policy:

6146 Graduation Requirements

Dr. Hatzis thanked the committee for allowing him and Mr. Cavanna to explain the change to this policy which they are recommending. Dr. Hatzis stated the recommended change is to lessen the number of indicators of academic expectation to three instead of six for the graduating class of 2023. Mr. Cavanna stated Page 13 of the handout helps to explain why they chose three indicators as the requirement. Mr. Cavanna also stated School Counselors meet regularly with students, so they are aware of their standings and are offered opportunities to meet the academic expectations.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked the Policy Committee if they were in agreement with the recommended change to three academic expectations instead of six for the class of 2023. The Policy Committee acknowledged they were in agreement with these changes at this time with the understanding that this policy will be edited in the future.

Recommended changes to this policy were approved by a 3-0 vote. This policy will be presented to the Board for a “first read” at tonight’s Board of Education meeting.

Update on Development of Reassessment Practices

Dr. Hatzis stated the reassessment piece had been part of the regulations, however, it was taken out. Dr. Hatzis and Mr. Cavanna are recommending that the topic be added back into the regulations. Dr. Hatzis explained the reasoning behind adding this topic back into the regulations was consistency, which is their number one goal.

Dr. Hatzis stated they have dedicated an enormous amount of time on the common elements. Ms. Jacobsen asked Dr. Hatzis if the district is currently doing reassessments now. Dr. Hatzis confirmed that the district is currently doing reassessments. Dr. Hatzis explained that test corrections are part of the reassessment process.

Dr. Tracy stated this is not the final product. Dr. Tracy explained it is still developing with an implementation timeline of the second semester. Dr. Hatzis stated they hope to test pilot it before it is rolled out to implement. Dr. Parrish stated the middle school administrators have concerns about the language used and how it impacts their Grade 6 students. Dr. Parrish asked the committee to change the language in the regulations so that it is clear the reassessment practice pertains to high school courses taken in the middle school.

6999 District Provided Distance Learning in Response to Emergencies

Dr. Tracy recommended the elimination of Roman numeral two in this policy since state and local health officials now treat COVID related illnesses the same as regular illnesses.

Recommended changes to this policy were approved by a 3-0 vote. This policy will be presented to the Board for a “first read” at tonight’s Board of Education meeting.

Discussion on Guidance to Staff on Issues Related to LGBTQ Students

Dr. Tracy stated we currently do not have a policy which provides a guideline to staff for issues relating to LGBTQ students. Dr. Tracy explained he was approached by parents over the summer asking for a guideline to be implemented. Dr. Tracy further explained he wants to ensure the district obeys the law so this guideline was provided by our attorneys.

Dr. Tracy stated his goal is to provide this document to staff next week for their review and feedback.

Ms. Guernsey thanked Dr. Tracy for taking the lead on this Guideline.

6162.51 – Surveys of Students

Ms. Byrnes stated our current policy needed to be updated due to an increase of requests for surveys. Ms. Byrnes explained some questions on surveys breach what is allowed by law. Ms. Byrnes further explained including regulations with this policy will help educate staff.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked Dr. Parrish how staff will be educated and made aware of the changes to this policy. Dr. Parrish stated staff will be trained, in conjunction with the IT Department, once the policy changes have been approved. Dr. Parrish also stated they will provide staff with samples of acceptable surveys.

Recommended changes to this policy were approved by a 3-0 vote. This policy will be presented to the Board for a “first read” at the next Board of Education meeting.

5113 Attendance, Excuses, Dismissal

Dr. Zavodjancik presented a revised version of this policy which included additional language on truancy. Dr. Zavodjancik stated two non-consecutive mental health wellness days were added to this policy outlined on Pages 30 and 31, item “H”. Ms. Jacobsen recommended that Dr. Zavodjancik advise the Fairfield Parks and Recreation Department about this policy since the Youth Service Bureau falls under their jurisdiction.

Ms. Jacobsen recommended removing item “C” on Page 29. Ms. Guernsey agreed to the removal of this item.

Ms. Jacobsen stated she is in favor of making the changes to this policy retroactive to July 1, 2022. Dr. Zavodjancik stated he is also in favor of this policy being retroactive to July 1, 2022.

Recommended changes to this policy were approved by a 3-0 vote. This policy will be presented to the Board for a “first read” at the next Board of Education meeting.

6159 Special Education

Mr. Mancusi stated this policy is no longer needed since it is covered under Federal law.

Recommendation to delete this policy was approved by a 3-0 vote. This policy will be presented to the Board for a “first read for deletion” at the next Board of Education meeting.

6171 Special Education

APPROVED 11/1/2022

Mr. Mancusi stated this policy is no longer needed since it is covered under Federal law.

Recommendation to delete this policy was approved by a 3-0 vote. This policy will be presented to the Board for a “first read for deletion” at the next Board of Education meeting.

3280 Gifts, Grants & Bequests

Ms. Guernsey recommended the \$2,000 threshold be increased. Ms. LeBoriosis stated she used suggested language from Shipman and Goodwin; however, the threshold can be changed. Ms. LeBoriosis asked the committee if increasing the threshold to \$5,000 would be acceptable to them. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly emphasized that the threshold isn't taking anything away from the school. Ms. Maxon-Kennelly explained the threshold merely pertains to what is required to go to the Superintendent for approval.

Ms. Jacobsen stated she is uncomfortable with the language in paragraph 3 on Page 44 which allows for reassignment of a gift.

Ms. Jacobsen questioned the language in paragraph 4 on Page 44. Ms. Jacobsen recommended language be added to the policy which pertains to the appeal process if a gift is denied.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly asked Ms. LeBoriosis for the revisions to this policy, as well as policy #1324 and #1230, be ready for the next policy meeting.

1324 Fund Raising

There was no discussion on this topic due to time restraints.

1230 Booster Clubs

There was no discussion on this topic due to time restraints.

Open Discussion/Public Comment

Ms. Katie Flynn – PTA Council President

APPROVED 11/1/2022

Ms. Flynn expressed concern about the recommended language in Policy #3280 Gifts Grants Bequests. Ms. Flynn stated she believes the intent is great; however, she is concerned the recommended language will limit donations to the PTAs.

Ms. Maxon-Kennelly recommended the following changes to the Policy Committee meeting dates:
November 22, 2022 – cancel
November 29, 2022 – add as Special meeting
December 6, 2022 – cancel

Changes to the Policy meeting calendar were approved with a 3-0 vote.

Adjournment - Ms. Maxon-Kennelly adjourned the meeting at 7:22pm.