



**Minutes  
Policy Committee**

**Avon Board of Education  
34 Simsbury, Avon, Connecticut 06001  
Meeting Room One  
Tuesday, January 7, 2020 —5:30 p.m.**

**Attendance**

**Members Present:** Laura Young, Chair; David Cavanaugh; Jason Indomenico

**Member(s) Absent:** None

**Administration Present:** Dr. B. Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Roberto Medic, Director of Human Resources

**Others Present:** Deb Chute, Board Chair; Shirley Moy, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order by Laura Young, Policy Committee Chair at 5:32 pm.*

II. Approval of October 1, 2019 Minutes

*Jason Indomenico moved, David Cavanaugh seconded, to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2019 Policy Committee meeting.*

*The motion passed 3-0-0.*

III. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public.

IV. New Business - Items for Review and Discussion

a. Policy 5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Mr. Medic presented recommended changes to the policy, which are based off the model policy provided by the District's legal counsel. The Legislative Session through Public Act 19-166 made changes, many having to do with future dated items, as well as some definitions and some procedures, which will become part of our regulations in the district. Mr. Medic addressed some of the key changes - Teen Dating violence has been added; the definition was previously not part of the policy but now ties in to many other aspects of the bullying policy. Clarification of the definition of bullying and cyberbullying have been more clearly delineated to address the aspects of the use of technology in bullying. Board counsel has reviewed all the recommended changes and definitions. Counsel also recommended the additions to the policy that will be addressed in future (July) legislature and to follow the various future aspects as best practices for the district.

Mr. Medic also referenced the recommendations for safe school climate plans, which addresses the responsibilities of staff and what is required by the district to submit to the State. To address a question from the committee, Mr. Medic explained that the district reviewed each school's climate plan as well as the district's climate plan utilizing a template provided by the state. There is also a requirement that we have a safe school climate committee in addition to a safety committee in each building to review any instances or alleged instances of bullying. The plan is reviewed every summer and submitted to the state in the fall.

Mr. Medic went on to answer committee questions of how particular instances of bullying is determined, explaining that it is first addressed at the building level by the principal or his/her designee. Based on the situation that occurs they investigate and determine if it meets the definition of bullying, cyberbullying or teen dating violence. Dr. Carnemolla added that others may be involved as well, depending on the situation and nature of the complaint, including the Title IX Coordinator, school psychologist, social worker, etc., however, making the determination is an administrator's responsibility. The Superintendent and Board counsel are also consulted to ensure the investigation is followed correctly. The Committee asked about the timing of the investigation, stressed the importance of promptness when informing parents of situations, and asked that both sets of parents be notified at the start of the investigation, *not* 48 hours after completion of investigation as mentioned in the policy. Dr. Carnemolla agreed but explained the value of leaving the word "*prompt*" in to allow administrators adequate time to determine issues of potential bullying. Mr. Medic added that one of the first steps is ensuring that an immediate face to face meeting with parents/guardians takes place in order to obtain parental/guardian consent to conduct the investigation and to inform them of the process and procedures as well as their rights. When bullying has been verified administrators will also meet with the parents of the alleged aggressor.

Mr. Medic addressed the Committee's questions on the inconsistent use of the words "*acts*", "*incidents*" and "*bullying behavior*". Dr. Carnemolla explained that the word "*incidents*" refers to behavior Mr. Medic explained that incidents describe actions more complex than a single act of bullying. Dr. Carnemolla added that the definition of bullying is now more than a specific thing that happened but now a bigger umbrella and more complex than a single act. Mr. Medic also explained that the policy offers summary language and encapsulates the definitions from the policy but will review the policy to ensure consistency is followed in use of the terms.

Mr. Medic discussed the regulations, procedures of investigations and who may be involved in an investigation, based on the specific needs of a child. The policy also talks about the role of the school climate coordinator and school climate specialist who oversee the safe school climate and school climate plans as well as implementation of the bullying policy. The highlights of the regulations include the processes that take place the moment administrators are made aware of alleged instances of bullying; communication between the school and the family; putting in temporary actions to provide safe environments for the victim and ensure that all students have the rights afforded to them throughout the investigation; how the investigation is conducted; how the determination of bullying is made; how to maintain confidentiality throughout; what actions to take to dispense disciplinary actions as well as ensuring that rights are protected for all students involved.

Dr. Carnemolla stated that the safe school climate plan and school plans would be updated and checked for consistency with the policy. The state had accepted the plans back in November and unless there are substantive changes, it does not go back to the Board. The recommendation were already given knowing what would be required when the plan was written.

Mr. Medic added training to staff to provide social/emotional support and learning throughout the year to students.

Parents are informed through multiple forms of communication as part of the investigation with attempts for an initial face to face meeting. The Superintendent and Title IX coordinator, when they are made aware of the incidence, walk administrators through the process ensuring policy and procedures are followed, including ensuring parents are informed. The Committee stressed once again, the importance that parents receive *“prompt”* notification of the investigation commencing, as was previously discussed.

Mr. Medic reviewed the portion of the policy that can be used as a supplemental in the student handbooks that would connect directly to the policy and regulations and ensure consistency in language used. The plan and forms will also be posted on our district and individual school websites.

Dr. Carnemolla reminded the Committee that the Discipline Policy was already updated with similar language and definitions.

Mr. Medic brought to the Committee’s attention that through the public act the definition of bullying has been redefined and the acts or instances of bullying no longer needs to be repetitive. It now focuses more on establishing a hostile environment by stating the acts are severe, persistent, and/or pervasive.

Mr. Medic added that the public act also clarifies that the purported victim and/or alleged perpetrator are not required to attend the same school or same district to be identified.

The committee asked Mr. Medic to create a summative paragraph of key changes prior to the next Policy meeting, in order to help prepare for a second read.

Dr. Carnemolla clarified how this policy is more specific to students, as bullying directed by adults towards other adults falls under the category of harassment or hostile work environment.

The Committee will review this policy for a second read before bringing it to the full Board.

b. Policy 6111 – School Calendar Setting & Graduation Date

The Superintendent asked that Policy 6111 be revised to make consistent with what the Board has already approved and what is being practiced in regards to complying with state laws in setting the graduation date. Dr. Carnemolla recommended that the title of the policy be revised and the entire third paragraph be deleted to not address the graduation date.

***Laura Young moved, Jason Indomenico seconded, to move Policy 6111 as revised to the full Board for approval, foregoing a second read by the Committee or Board.  
The motion passed 3-0-0.***

c. Policy 6144 – Controversial Issues

Dr. Carnemolla explained that this policy is referenced in a previously reviewed policy, Instructional Material. Legal counsel was asked to review the policy in its entirety comparing it to the other policies similar in nature. Counsel suggested very few changes: replace sectarian issues with religious issues and details regarding fulfilling job duties. The Superintendent recommended that the form be deleted as it does not help and is detrimental to the process of handling the complaint.

Dr. Carnemolla suggested that nothing be done with the policy currently but to give it more thought.

The Committee will review this policy for a second read.

V. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public.

VI. Future Items for Review

- a. Student Nutrition and Physical Activity
- b. Bylaws of the Avon Board of Ed
- c. School Volunteers & Parent Involvement

VII. Adjournment

***JI moved, David Cavanaugh seconded, to adjourn the meeting.  
The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:33 pm.***

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Young, Policy Committee Chair

*Laura Young, January 17, 2020*

Minutes respectfully received by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

*Jeffrey S. Fleischman, January 17, 2020*

***Minutes are approved at the next Policy meeting, and any corrections to the minutes, if needed, will be made at that time.***