

Committee on Policy and Legislation Minutes  
September 9, 2021 at 5:15 pm  
Via Zoom

Attendees:	<u>Committee Members</u>	<u>Central Office</u>
	Ann Sweeney Chair	Superintendent Verna Ruffin
	Juanita Hernandez	Chief Academic Officer Darren Schwartz
	Amanda Nardozzi	Attorney Tara Shaw
	Charles Stango	
	Karen Harvey	

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:15 pm.

**Item #1:**

*Discussion: Model Policy for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth-5145-53*

Attorney Shaw presented a recommended policy from CAGE regarding procedures relating to Transgender and Non-Conforming Youth. While not currently required under Connecticut law, some segments do relate to federal law under Title IX. The district has seen some situations related to this issue in the prior school year. The policy would provide for clear and consistent handling of all such issues.

Attorney Shaw has additional information she will provide for our next meeting and invited the committee to contact her in the interim with any questions or suggestions. There was one request for a language addition that will be presented with the next draft. A question about use of ESSER funds to provide additional separate bathroom facilities was answered. Funds might be accessible for that purpose, and the request should be conveyed to the Facilities Study group led by SLAM.

**Item #2**

*COVID Grading 2021-2022*

Darren Schwartz provided a PowerPoint Presentation that looked at data from the 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years as relates to the number of students with failing grades for those respective years. The data indicates that despite the new minimum grade of 50 for the 2020-2021 school year, the number of students across all grades who did not pass increased for 2020-2021 over the prior two years. COVID continues to create an issue for the 2021-2022 school year. There are currently about 50 students quarantined at home, who are missing the benefits of in-person on hand learning that has shown clear achievement benefits over remote learning. The Superintendent is recommending we continue the 50 as bottom grade policy for the 2021-2022 school year. The district will provide data on pass/fail grades at the end of each semester, and additional data on impact to SAT, PSAT, College board exams etc. There was dialogue around a mastery based system and how that could provide a clearer picture of what students are actually learning compared to the current 100-point grading system. Dr. Ruffin agreed to provide the board with a presentation on what a mastery based system could look like in Waterbury.

Motion to recommend approval to suspend the current Elementary, Middle and High School Grading system for the 2021-2022 school year. (Policies #6146.11,6146.111,6146.1)

Motion made by Amanda Nardoizzi/seconded by Juanita Hernandez – Yeas/5; Nays/0; Abstentions/0.

Motion to recommend approval of a COVID grading system for elementary, middle, and high school for the 2021/22 school year.

Motion made by Juanita Hernandez/seconded by Amanda Nardoizzi – Yeas/5; Nays/0; Abstentions/0.

**Item #3:**

*Discussion: Proposed Rules and Regulations Appendix*

The chair presented a brief overview of the content of an appendix and made some suggestions for what might be appropriate for our policy 9010. This is a continuing discussion and the committee was asked to review the suggestions and provide feedback and suggestions for the next meeting.

**Item #4:**

*Discussion: Proposed Board Member Handbook*

The chair provided some suggestions for items to include in a Board Member handbook and invited discussion and ideas from the committee. There was discussion about our current bylaws which direct the President of the Board to provide new member training. There was a question on if the committee had taken a vote on a handbook. Response from the chair was that the committee was working to draft something that they could then vote to present to the full board. Consensus of the committee prior had been to continue to explore a draft. The handbook is not proposed as a substitute for the new member training required under policy 9010. It was proposed as a tool for all board members to have for quick research on common situations occurring as part of board duties and responsibilities.

Attorney Shaw recommended we include a section on board members' responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Additional suggestions included acronyms and current grants. There was additional discussion on need to update the handbook in the future.

The chair will provide a draft with the current suggestions for the next meeting. The committee was asked to provide any further information to be included prior to the next meeting.

**Item #5:**

*Scheduling of the next meeting*

The next Policy and Legislation Committee meeting is scheduled for September 30 at 5:30 pm.

Motion to adjourn at 6:33 p.m. by Juanita Hernandez and seconded by Charles Stango, passed unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Ann Sweeney