

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, October 14, 2021
Administration Building Conference Room

Board of Education Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairman
Eugene Marchand, Secretary
Mary Kortmann
Michael Sobol
Christina Williams
Robert Williams

Board of Education Members Absent:

William Oros, Vice Chairman

Also present: Celia Delvecchio, Board of Education Student Representative

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

Audience: There were a few citizens present.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

Linda Blakesley, 27 Barry Avenue, said she was present again to speak on behalf of transgender students, Hispanic Heritage Month, and renaming Columbus Day. She asked the Board rename the holiday to Indigenous Peoples Day. She submitted a statement, which is attached to these minutes.

IV. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reviewed happenings taking place around the district, region, and state. He noted Chief Palmer's retirement and J. Beausoleil said they would honor him for his service at the October 28 Board meeting.

Miss Delvecchio commented on items related to the high school, including CHS Open House and activities getting back to normal. E. Marchand asked about any upcoming senior activities. Celia said the senior breakfast just took place, and other events are being looked at, such as prom.

V. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil talked about the new Board meeting set up, which allows for more seating and better Board member collaboration. She noted upcoming items on the calendar - conferences and professional development taking place on voting day - November 2. She reviewed post-election procedures.

VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VII. A. Approve Minutes of September 30, 2021

MOTION: To approve the minutes of September 30, 2021.

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: M. Sobol

Discussion: R. Williams asked that the following be added to the top of page 3, after the first paragraph: R. Williams requested the individualistic SAT data be shared and Dr. Petrone said he would not be sharing the information. M. Sobol said the justification should then also be added. J. Beausoleil asked that the minutes be adjusted and brought back for a vote at the next meeting.

Result: The motion was tabled.

VIII. Old Business

VIII. A. Information: Microgrid Update

Dr. Petrone said he signed off on the document that was reviewed by the Board's attorney and approved by the Board at the last meeting. He added that there was nothing else to report.

VIII. B. Discussion and Possible VOTE: Approve revisions to Policy ByLaw 9150 Official Duties - Chairperson

MOTION: To approve the revisions to Policy, ByLaw 9150 Official Duties - Chairperson as presented.

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: M. Sobol

Discussion: C. Williams said her concerns remain the same and that all feedback should be included in writing; all feedback is important. J. Beausoleil noted that she was under the impression that this new language would satisfy concerns. M. Sobol and E. Marchand reviewed the changes in the language and noted that this is just putting a process that is already in place, in writing. C. Williams reiterated her concerns. The Board discussed if changes could be made now. M. Kortmann said people can do things orally whenever they want; the policy does not need to state that. E. Marchand moved for the vote.

Result: Motion passes 4-2 (C. Williams and R. Williams against)

IX. New Business

J. Beausoleil reviewed the process to review the policies up for discussion.

E. Marchand said the majority of the changes were from Shipman and Goodwin.

IX. A. Discussion: Review NEW Policy 1325.1 Advertising at District Athletic Fields (To be warned for a VOTE at a future Board meeting)

E. Marchand reviewed the policy.

M. Kortmann asked if the signs go up and down for each sport. Dr. Petrone said that is the plan.

R. Williams asked if this is available to all sports, to be equal. J. Beausoleil said it is for just field sports. Dr. Petrone talked about the fundraising that is done for indoor sports; each team has a way they generate additional funds. M. Kortmann noted that football is doing all of the work and they are not funded by the Board, where the other indoor sports are funded and that fundraising is just for extras.

J. Beausoleil said there was not consensus to change the original policy language back to "facilities."

C. Williams said that controversy-driven items are not listed as prohibited. J. Beausoleil said that the Superintendent will review advertising and has the authority to deny.

The policy will move forward as is for a vote.

IX. B. Information and Discussion: Policies for Revision (To be warned for a VOTE at a future Board meeting)

1. 1231 Non-Discrimination – Community

E. Marchand noted the language changes.

C. Williams asked about the "unhonorable qualifying conditions." Dr. Petrone said the language is governed by state statute.

The Board discussed various language included in the policy.

The policy will be moved forward as is for a vote.

2. 1241 Volunteers, Interns and other Non-employees

E. Marchand noted the language changes made to this policy. C. Williams asked about the details surrounding what is required of volunteers as far as health and safety protocols; she would like to see it aligned with the staff requirements. J. Beausoleil said that is at the discretion of the administration of the district. C. Williams said she would like to push it back for further review. There was not consensus to return it to Committee.

The policy will move forward as is to the full Board.

3. 1250 Visitors and Observations in Schools

E. Marchand reviewed the language changes.

C. Williams noted the original language regarding observations and that she does not feel there should be a limit for parents. J. Beausoleil said the language is there to avoid disruptive behavior.

C. Williams noted the health and safety protocol and would like visitors to match staff. M. Sobol said it draws out that it is related to the safety protocols in place at the time. M. Kortmann said it should be more stringent for casual visitors.

J. Beausoleil said the policy will move forward as is.

4. 1330 Use of School Facilities

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

C. Williams noted paragraph 2 and "whether or not school is in session." She said she is concerned about what is happening in the schools while students are there. Dr. Petrone said it refers to items such as the PTO or the Booth and Dimock Library and that all visitor's identity is verified.

C. Williams discussed outside groups using the schools and how do they follow all health and safety protocols. Dr. Petrone said with the same procedures as related to any building use; the user is responsible and has to attest to the rules being followed.

The policy will move forwards is for a vote.

5. 3514 Green Cleaning Programs

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy. There was no discussion.

The policy will move forward as is.

6. 3541 Transportation

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

C. Williams talked about the grammar and the noted state statute.

J. Beausoleil said it is legal language provided by the attorneys.

The policy will move forward for a vote as is.

7. 3542 Model Code of Conduct Governing Procurements Under A Federal Award

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy. The policy will move forward for a vote.

8. 4115.3 Athletic Coaches - Evaluation, Non-Renewal, and Termination

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy. The policy will move forward for a vote as is.

9. 4116.1 Non-Discrimination - Personnel

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy. M. Sobol said this ties back to state statute.

C. Williams talked about current language in the 2nd paragraph on page one and asked if girls can play in boys' sports teams and vice versa. J. Beausoleil said the teams are bound by the CIAC and those eligibility requirements.

The policy will move forward for a vote as is.

10. 4116.2 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

C. Williams noted the last sentence of the first page; and asked if our sports receive federal assistance. The answer was no.

C. Williams asked for clarification regarding the language noted regarding Title IX and VII. J. Beausoleil said if we have to reference the language in the law, we cannot change it. She recommended moving it forward as is.

This policy will move forward for a vote.

11. 4116.11 Section 504 ADA

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

12. 5122.2 Non-Discrimination – Students

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

C. Williams asked about gender-related identity on the bottom of page 2. J. Beausoleil noted this is due to state statute.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

13. 5127 Graduation Requirements

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

M. Kortmann verified the language about American Government. Dr. Petrone said this is a clarification of what is happening.

C. Williams asked about the history of the changes to the requirements. M. Kortmann said the state requirements changed. M. Kortmann added that Coventry's requirements are always more robust.

The Board discussed the various credits required.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

14. 5131 - Title IX Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

15. 5131.7 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

Dr. Petrone said this was dialed back with a change in the criteria for labeling property.

The Board discussed the various language changes. C. Williams expressed her concern regarding specific language being removed. Dr. Petrone said this follows legal verbiage. C. Williams noted paragraph 8 on page 3 - and wanted clarification on procedures. Dr. Petrone said procedures to close-out unverified incidents are not included in policy, like many other situations related to discipline.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

16. 5131.71 Safe School Climate Plan

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

C. Williams referred to page 4, subset 1 - school employees. The Board discussed the language changes.

C. Williams asked if the Board could get what last year's recommendations were, as noted on page 5, section 4. Dr. Petrone said quite often these are verbal and not in writing.

C. Williams asked if the changes are in place now, and if not, how soon would they be. Dr. Petrone said it usually happens within the year.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

17. 5131.72 Child Sexual Abuse and-or Sexual Assault Response Policy and Reporting Procedure

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

The Committee discussed what should be reported. Dr. Petrone said the district is reporting most everything that comes up. J. Beausoleil said the legal advice is, if anything is reported to you, it should be reported to DCF.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

18. 5144 Student Discipline

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

C. Williams wondered about discipline for exercising civil rights like a peaceful protest. M. Sobol said the policy says "may" not "shall" be disciplined. Dr. Petrone said it is about communication and treating everyone with respect.

C. Williams asked about #34 on page 8 and specifically about how this might relate to mask breaks. She said she is very uncomfortable with this very emotional item being added. She noted, even though it does say "may" she is still uncomfortable. J. Beausoleil gave examples of

why this is needed; she added that parents have the ability to appeal a discipline decision. Dr. Petrone said the goal is to keep everyone safe. He said situations such as these are worked on collaboratively. C. Williams reiterated her concern over the discipline related to masks. J. Beausoleil said this is related to health and safety protocols.

There was not consensus to send it back to policy or to modify the language; this policy will move forward for a vote as is.

19. 5145.4 Student Privacy

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

20. 6146.1 Weighted Grading and Calculation of Grade Point Averages

E. Marchand noted the language changes to this policy. Dr. Petrone explained the history, noting that both rankings are listed on the transcripts.

This policy will move forward for a vote as is.

X. Report of Board Members

X. A. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of October 14, 2021

J. Beausoleil reviewed the discussions at the Fiscal Committee meeting. She mentioned the CIP and said it should be available for the Board to vote on at the next Board meeting. Dr. Petrone encouraged folks to read the narrative attached to the CIP.

C. Williams asked about the CGS sidewalks; the PSSS bus; and cameras at the complex. Dr. Petrone explained that the sidewalks are the ones in the back of the school; there are two PSSS vans; and that the cameras are always being assessed.

XI. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 10:21 p.m.

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion carries unanimously

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: October 28, 2021

10/14/2021

Good evening. My name is Linda Blakesley and I live at 27 Berry Avenue.

I spoke two weeks ago on 3 topics.

1. Support for transgender students
2. Celebration of Hispanic American Heritage Month
3. Renaming Columbus Day

First, I'd like to revisit my request for the Board to immediately consider renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. The holiday has come and gone, but it can still be addressed. It still matters. It still causes harm and trauma. It still represents rape and murder. Let Coventry join the other leaders who have led their town to changing the name of Columbus Day. Hartford and Manchester have both done so.

Let Coventry honor its ancestors who walked these grounds before us.