

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, December 8, 2022
Administration Building Conference Room

Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairperson
Gene Marchand, Vice Chairperson
Mary Kortmann, Secretary
Peter DePaola
Emma Eaton
Courtney Rossignol
Christina Williams

Also Present: Maya Waterhouse, Student BOE Representative

Administrators Present:

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

Audience: Ross Sward, CNH Principal; Students being recognized with their families; and two observers.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

J. Beausoleil explained PJ Day in Coventry (a fundraiser for CT Children's Medical Center) and that some members of the Board are supporting that cause this evening by wearing their PJs.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

There were none.

IV. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reported on various events and meetings taking place locally, regionally, and state-wide. Dr. Petrone congratulated the Board for being recognized in *The Chronicle* for their leadership award.

IV.A. Recognition: CNH Sixth Grade Students Finlay Eaton, Brayden Crouch, Mia Alderucci - Patriots Pen Youth Essay Contest

Dr. Petrone recognized the students who won the Patriots Pen Youth Essay Contest. Brayden Crouch and Finlay Eaton were present to be honored by the Board. Mr. Sward said a few words about each student. P. DePaola thanked the students for writing about veterans. There were congratulations from the Board.

IV.B. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report

Miss Waterhouse reported on activities at CHS including winter sports beginning, the upcoming winter concerts, and PJ Day.

IV.C. Information: Remote Learning Commission Report

Dr. Petrone reviewed the State of Connecticut's Remote Learning Commission Report, which had been sent previously to the Board and is available on BoardBook.

IV.D. Information: International Students

Dr. Petrone talked about bringing in international students and using the company Educatius to recruit students to Coventry. Dr. Petrone asked for agreement from the Board. E. Marchand said this is a wonderful idea. P. DePaola spoke from experience and appreciated the work that these companies do and said it was a very positive experience for families. M. Kortmann noted her approval. There was consensus to move forward.

IV.E. Information: HVAC Grant Update

Dr. Petrone said this item is on the agenda as information to let the Board know the grant was submitted on time.

V. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil noted the Coventry Christmas in the Village event, the PTO Craft Fair, and the PJ Day event. She added that budget season is coming soon, starting in January.

VI. Communications

C. Williams asked for guidance regarding the agenda item Communications. J. Beausoleil said it is more for official communications, e.g., Town Hall communications.

VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VII.A. Approve Minutes of November 10, 2022

MOTION: To approve the minutes of November 10, 2022

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes 5-0-2 (E. Marchand and C. Rossignol abstained)

VIII. New Business

VIII.A. Information: DRAFT FY2024 Budget Planning Dates for 2023

J. Beausoleil reviewed the budget planning dates for 2023.

VIII.B. Discussion: Review of Policies (All to be warned for a VOTE at a future meeting.)

J. Beausoleil reviewed the policy procedures. C. Williams asked to review each policy one at a time. E. Eaton agreed.

VIII.B.1. Discussion: Review New Draft Policies

VIII.B.1.a. NEW 5127.1 Improve Completion Rates of FAFSA

E. Eaton reviewed the rationale for this new policy. Dr. Petrone noted the high school is already doing this.

C. Williams expressed her concerns: this is a forced invasion of family finances and this policy is putting in place the need for a metric. E. Eaton said there is not a metric, it is only the policy we are required to have in place according to state law.

P. DePaola also expressed concerns, saying the wording specific to the administrative regulations could be softened.

M. Kortmann said the state is pushing this; it is not a Coventry initiative. She said that the State found that students did not know about the FAFSA program. Dr. Petrone said the goal is to make sure students are aware, but it is not a requirement to complete it. The Board discussed these points of view.

J. Beausoleil said that a Board member can revise this and come up with a new draft. E. Marchand said the attorneys have drafted this with legal efficacies in place and he has concerns with editing the language.

C. Williams offered to draft a revised policy for the Policy Committee to review.

[The policy will not move forward at this time, but will go back to Committee after suggestions are received.]

VIII.B.1.b. NEW 6158 Credit for Online Courses

E. Eaton reviewed the new policy language.

C. Williams asked how these programs are vetted and that the programs that we use be added to the policy. Dr. Petrone said he is hesitant to name the program in the policy in case the program changes. J. Beausoleil agreed and said this would not be a random program and the policy says it has to be approved and it must be an accredited program. E. Eaton said there are a number of fail safes included.

C. Williams talked about the number of credits that can be taken. Dr. Petrone said you can only take a credit that is not offered at Coventry High School. E. Eaton noted that there is an approval process. The Board discussed these points of view.

After further discussion, it was determined that this policy is aimed toward programs that can be found outside of Virtual High School and that there is an extensive approval process in place. Dr. Petrone said it is the school's decision as to what courses are approved.

C. Williams said she does not care for the language and it is too broad.

C. Williams asked who is liable for the content of these courses. Dr. Petrone said they are taught by certified staff and are bound by the same regulations. Dr. Petrone said there is a syllabus and the parents review and sign off on it.

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.1.c. NEW 6171 Equitable Identification of Gifted and Talented Students

E. Eaton reviewed the new policy on identifying Gifted and Talented Students.

Dr. Petrone explained the procedures for identifying students in the district. He added that while these students need to be identified, we are not required to provide services, but Coventry does.

P. DePaola asked for clarity on the definition of how students are identified.

There was discussion on how identifying works. Dr. Petrone said it is a team decision. J. Beausoleil again said, while a student may be identified, the district does not have to provide services, but Coventry does.

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.1.d. NEW 6179 Advanced Course or Program Challenging Curriculum

E. Eaton explained the new policy.

Dr. Petrone said there is a process in place to identify students for advanced course placement. He added, as an example, we have a process in place to identify middle school students who may be able to take advanced classes at the high school. The Board discussed the language.

P. DePaola talked about the guiding principles in section 4. M. Kortmann said this was probably written for districts that have barriers in place that prevent students from participating.

C. Williams talked about section 3 and asked what a success plan is for a student. Dr. Petrone said students meet with guidance counselors and they develop a plan together. There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2. Discussion: Review of Policy Revisions

VIII.B.2.a. 3542.4 Food Service Charging Policy

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to this policy. The Board discussed dissemination of the policy and the meal charging details.

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.b. 4116.35 Child Abuse Neglect and Sexual Assault Reporting

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to this policy. The Board discussed the dissemination of the policy, reporting procedures, and the necessity of duplicate language.

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.c. 4118.5 Employee Use of the Districts Computer Systems

E. Eaton reviewed the updates made to this policy.

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.d. 5118.2 Foreign Exchange Students

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to the policy. There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.e. 5131.2 Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety

C. Williams asked if Social Media sites are blocked. Dr. Petrone said yes as best as they can do. There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.f. 5131.4 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students

There was no discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.g. 5141.21 Administration of Medications in Schools

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to this policy.

P. DePaola talked about the definition of Administration of Medication on page one and said he believes it needs to be separated out - one for the administration and one for the storage. M. Kortmann disagreed and said it is talking about the full process of when administration of medication needs to happen. The Board discussed the language. E. Marchand asked that the concern be raised to Shipman and Goodwin.

The policy will go back to the Committee for clarification with Shipman and Goodwin on the definition.

Additionally, P. DePaola talked about any medication errors and he wanted to be sure errors are reported to the appropriate people and dealt with appropriately. C. Rossignol said the procedure is noted in the policy. J. Beausoleil said concerns about the severity or number of errors would be addressed at a personnel level. E. Eaton said the accountability is built into the policy. P. DePaola said it seemed vague to him.

VIII.B.2.h. 5145 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to the policy. There was no discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.i. 5146 Physical Activity, Undirected Play, and Student Discipline

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to the policy.

There was no discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.j. 6164 Curricular Exemptions

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to the policy.

C. Williams asked that the Board's voted agreement to notify parents about the 9th grade health curriculum be added.

P. DePaola asked that notification to parents for all of these be added. E. Eaton said we have a curriculum website, which is robust and parents have access to that.

C. Williams reviewed her concerns and said we should disseminate this policy to parents as well.

E. Eaton said she was okay with disseminating the policy annually to parents.

P. DePaola said he wants parents to know ahead of time of when the items are going to be taught and he would like that added to the policy.

C. Williams said the beginning of the year would be a good time to send this to parents, with specifications as to what will take place this year, in whatever grade their child is in.

J. Beausoleil said she would be comfortable with the policy going out annually, but not in advance of each course being taught.

There was consensus that the policy be disseminated annually to parents; and that the action of such be noted in the policy.

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.k. 9360 Construction and Posting of Agenda

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to this policy.

C. Rossignol asked what updates were made to the policy since the Committee met. Dr. Petrone said only clarification from the attorney regarding the legal number of hours or days of different requirements for postings or notifications. The Board discussed the clarification on various timelines.

The Board discussed the number of Board members needed to agree to additional agenda items submitted by town residents. The Board agreed that the new language "two-thirds" be removed and "at least three Board members" remain as the language for that item [section I.C.3.].

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.l. 9362 Time, Place, and Notice of Meetings

E. Eaton reviewed the changes to the policy.

The Board discussed the remote meeting regulations.

The Board discussed the language of a two-thirds vote needed to call a special meeting [section 2.A.]. There was consensus to leave the language as "...three members of the Board."

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.m. 9367 Quorum and Voting Procedures

E. Eaton reviewed the policy changes.

C. Williams said she believes that section 2.F. is in contradiction with section 4.F. of 9368.2. Dr. Petrone explained the two policies are talking about two different kinds of statements - one verbal made during a meeting [9367] and one written to be attached to minutes [9368.2].

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.n. 9368 Meeting Conduct

E. Eaton reviewed the policy changes.

C. Williams expressed her concern about duplication of language related to the remote meetings. Dr. Petrone said we have been advised legally, the statements need to be included in the policies, even if duplicated.

J. Beausoleil reviewed various points regarding remote attendance noted in the policy, such as a Board member participating remotely is asked to keep their camera on.

P. DePaola noted the last page, item 3 and the reference to *boisterous* conduct and would like different language. There were no changes made.

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

VIII.B.2.o. 9368.2 Minutes

E. Eaton reviewed the changes.

C. Williams noted item 4.F. and said she likes that we have been able to add written statements.

She said she would like 4.D. to include any rationale for voting a certain way. P. DePaola agreed, saying he would like the same language from the policy 9367 added here. The Board agree to add 2.F. language from 9367 - "Board members shall have the opportunity to explain their votes, with the explanation to be recorded in the minutes."

There was no further discussion; the policy will move forward.

IX. Report of Board Members

IX.A. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of December 8, 2022

M. Kortmann noted all is looking pretty good. She added that we are waiting for finalization on an outplacement, which will affect the bottom line. She talked about the RFP

for the special education van and that the bids came in too high. She said we will wait and work with what we have for now.

X. Old Business

X.A. Information: Wesleyan Adolescent Sexual Health Awareness Program

C. Williams expressed her concern regarding information shared on sexual pleasure. J. Beausoleil said if you review the website, the program is customized to the age of the students and sexual pleasure is not listed for high school students. The Board discussed what was presented recently to CHS students.

C. Williams expressed her concern with continuing to have Wesleyan come to Coventry. Dr. Petrone said the program is used by many high schools across the state. He added that the administration has already agreed that they will be notifying parents before the program takes place, so they can opt out if they wish. The Board continued to discuss the details of the Wesleyan program and those presenter students who come to Coventry. Dr. Petrone reiterated the steps that are going to take place going forward.

XI. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:59 p.m.

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: January 12, 2023