

# LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

*Regional School District #18*

*A Private School Experience*



*in a Public School Setting*

## **Policy and Communications Committee Meeting**

**November 8, 2023**

*Committee Members Present:* Jason Kemp, Policy Committee Chair; Suzanne Thompson, Communications Committee Chair; Laura Dean-Frazier; Anna James; Mary Powell St. Louis; Martha Shoemaker; Steven Wilson

*Administration Present:* Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools

*Others Present:* Bridget Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m.

### *Communications Update*

Mrs. Compagno reported that the *Focus on Education* newsletter went out recently with a slightly new design. The next edition will go out in January and will feature a welcome to the newly elected Board members and a thanks to the outgoing ones. It will also include an update on the PK-8 Facilities Project and a feature length article with the subject to be determined. Mrs. Compagno also reported that the teacher profiles are going out every two weeks this year; posts to the district's social media accounts occur two to four each week; and a video series to capture thoughts of the students is in the works.

### *Policy Update*

Policy 6153 Field Trips

Mr. Neviaser reviewed recommended new verbiage added to this policy related to Type C field trips; more specifically, breaking up Type C (multiple day field trips) into two categories:

Type C.1 – experiential trips not funded by the district including, but not limited to, trips to foreign countries or other states during vacation periods.

Type C.2 – regional or national competitions where the individual student (or group of students) has been invited to compete based on their performance. Such competition must be sanctioned by the activity's governing body. Unsanctioned competitions will be considered voluntary and will not be subject to the requirements of this policy.

***Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools***

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Wording was also added to the policy that gives the superintendent the right to approve such trip (C.2) if it is not feasible to arrange timely approval of this field trip by the Board of Education.

Mr. Neviasser also reviewed current practice related to students paying all or part of the expenses of field trips. Current practice:

K-5 – District covers cost.

6-8 – District covers transportation for all trips, and uses various funding sources (LYSB, PTO, district funds) to subsidize the cost of trips to keep the total cost reasonable for families (typically in the \$20 range).

9-12 – District funds ground transportation for regional/national events, regular trips vary dependent on cost...mostly student funded.

The superintendent's changes to Policy 6153 were approved by the committee; Policy 6153 will move for Board of Ed approval at their December meeting.

The following policies and verbiage from the Connecticut State Law book were reviewed due to a request by Board member Anna James requesting that current public comment practices be reviewed by the Policy Committee. More specifically, Mrs. James requested the following:

- Ensuring civility from the public and avoidance of personal attacks.
- Keeping comments to the three minute limit.
- Board members not engaging with the public during public comment (as has been past practice).

Mrs. James also recommended that *Robert's Rules of Order* and Board policy be followed during public comment.

Policy 1120 Public Participation at Board Meetings

Policy 9325 Meetings of the Board of Education

Policy 1312 Public Complaints

Connecticut State Law book verbiage on determining procedures for conducting meetings.

Policy 1120 Public Participation at Board Meetings. Mr. Neviasser did not recommend any changes to this policy. He did note that the section stating "Questions and/or comments by members of the public are to be restricted to the specific agenda item being discussed..." has never been followed. The committee did not make any changes to this policy as it referred mainly to public participation and not specific to public comment.

Policy 9325 Meetings of the Board of Education. Mr. Neviasser reviewed this policy and a section of the Connecticut School law book relative to procedures for conducting meetings. Mrs. James discussed the expectations of civility and being courteous during the meetings.

The committee discussed the ability for any Board member to call a point of order which the Board Chair must acknowledge. They also discussed that no time limit on public comment was included in this policy although this is stated on every regular meeting agenda when public comment is an agenda item. The committee agreed to the following change in verbiage: *Where a member of the public wishes to exceed the ~~stated~~ three minute time limit for public comment, advance notice of seven days to the Chairperson of the Lyme-Old Lyme Board of Education is requested.*

Policy 1312 Public Complaints. The committee discussed their various views on how to handle public comment during a Board meeting; more specifically, addressing the comments at the time they are made. Several committee members did not think it appropriate to address immediately making for more efficient meetings, avoiding partisan behavior, and giving the Board sufficient time to pursue at a future meeting (with appropriate notice to the Board and community on what is going to be discussed). Others felt it important to address public comment immediately especially if correcting misinformation and that the limited amount of public comment received did not seem to affect meeting efficiency. There were no changes made to this policy.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.