

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Policy and Communications Committee Meeting

May 7, 2024

Committee Members Present: Anna James, Policy Committee Chair; Laura Dean-Frazier, Communications Committee Chair; Jason Kemp; Gavin Lodge

Administration Present: Ian Neviasser, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School

Others Present: Bridget Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Communications Update

Mrs. Compagno reported on the budget referendum vote which was taking place that day, noting a good turnout in Old Lyme.

Mrs. Compagno reported that the next edition of the *Focus on Education* newsletter will go out in July and is the “graduation” issue with additional stories on Sean Kennedy, newly hired (effective July 1) part-time assistant principal at Mile Creek School and “Arts Day” at LOLMS. Mr. Ambruso explained what occurs on this day and the types of activities offered to the students.

Mrs. Compagno reported that she is working on a story for the local *Events* magazine, the topic of which is the electrical vehicle design class at LOLHS. She also noted that *The Day* annually does a story on one of the high school seniors, with the possibility of a story on the student from Syria.

On the subject of social media, Mrs. Compagno reported that a selected senior will be named guest “Instagrammer” for one day and post stories on the day in the life of a senior on the district’s Instagram account.

Mrs. Compagno is still working on getting information out to the community on volunteering to be a host family for one of several Chinese students who will be attending LOLHS in the fall.

Policy Update

Policy 5131.81 Use of Electronic and Telecommunications Devices

Based on a request by Anna James and the results of the Lymes Youth Service Bureau's recent youth survey which showed excessive time spent on electronic devices by students, the committee reviewed the district's current policy on use of electronic devices. Mr. Neviasser also distributed some CABE sample policies on this subject matter.

The group discussed the current policy for cell phone usage during school hours at the elementary, middle and high school levels. In general, they are not allowed at the elementary level; they are allowed at the middle school but they cannot be used during school hours (8th graders can use during lunch as a special privilege); they are allowed at the high school but not during class. Mr. Ambruso and Mr. Ventola noted that it is their intention to only allow cell phones in student's backpacks (less distracting) starting in the fall.

The administration stressed that the cell phone issues that arise are mainly social media issues after school hours. The group discussed the problem with society's addiction to cell phones and social media and the effect it is having on the younger generation.

The group reviewed the current policy on electronic devices. Some minor changes were made to make the policy more up to date using current technology verbiage. This policy will go before the Board of Education at their June 5 meeting for a first read.

On another subject, the group discussed the affordability of field trips and fundraising and scholarship efforts in order to make these opportunities open to all students.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.