

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Policy Committee
Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 4:15 pm - 5:15 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

amie McCallum called the meeting to order at 4:16 pm.

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff

In attendance were: Jamie McCallum, Ellen Whelan-Wuest, Laura Harthan and Steve Orzech, as well as Laura Nugent, Director of Special Education for ACSD. Joanna Doria, Wendy Baker and Mary Slosar arrived after the call to order and introductions.

B. Public Comment - Agenda Items

No public comment.

C. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of 2/26/2024

There were not enough board members who were previously part of the Policy Committee to vote in favor of adopting last meeting's minutes. Jamie moved to table approving these meeting minutes until we get more guidance on how to proceed under these circumstances.

D. Committee Discussion:

1. Committee Reorgaization

a. Election of Committee Chair

Jamie McCallum will be the committee Chair

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Steve Orzech Status: Passed

b. Election of Minutes Recording

Ellen Whelan-Wuest will be minutes recorder

Move: Jamie McCallum Second: Steve Orzech Status: Passed

2. A20: Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation & Distribution

Jamie explained that the Policy Committee approves policy that is required or suggested by VSBA, discuss, refine and vote on whether to move it on to the full board for approval. The next role, that the committee has done less often, is write our own policies. We would research, write, discuss and vote on whether to pass that new policy on to the board. It has seemed like the Policy Committee up to this point has been more about staying current with VSBA. Today we are discussing a new policy that Laura Nugent will discuss with us. Jamie has ideas about how to make this committee more engaged or proactive about setting policies to meet the needs of our district.

Steve pointed out that the VSBA policies are reviewed by lawyers, and when they are required that means there is a statutory requirement we need to follow. When they are recommended, the policy is meant to keep us in line with VSBA. However, VSBA doesn't always update boards about changes in their policies or what changes they have made to updated policies.

Steve suggested that Jamie could delegate monitoring VSBA updates and requirements to other members of the committee as well. Steve also said that it would be good practice to reach out to VSBA if and as we begin to develop our new policies to ask if they have a model policy already.

The committee discussed limitations and challenges to being a more proactive policy committee, and the opportunities. Steve pointed out that a problem with being super proactive is that new policies require that the administration create implementation procedures, so we need to be aware of not passing so many new policies that it becomes a burden. Ellen observed it is unlikely we would over correct in that direction immediately.

Policy A:20

Jamie will reach out to the Executive Committee to ask if we, as a board, should be formally adopting the agenda before full board meetings.

3. C9: Wellness Policy

Laura explained that when the Board got a template for the updated Wellness policy from the VSBA, it was a lot shorter and less robust than our current wellness policy. And when Laura brought together stakeholders to review the VSBA model policy, a lot of red flags were raised. VSBA explained to Laura that they had not intended for our (or any) Policy Committee to gut what we had and adopt the VSBA version. So, most of ACSD's original wellness policy was reinstated except for two new sections, one that would establish 60 minutes of unstructured, outdoor time for kids during the school day, and the other spoke to creating a wellness committee that would continuously engage around wellness, and include and go beyond Board members, that it be made up of stakeholders as well.

To inform the unstructured outdoor time, Laura asked administrators in the schools what is happening now, and she compiled that into a spreadsheet (included in Boardpaq materials). In many cases the schools are getting to the 30-60 minute recommendation. Laura said she would recommend that if the board adopt a policy that would set up for 30-60 minutes of unstructured play, to create some flexibility and allow for a longer timeline for adoption across all the schools.

Steve asked what unstructured, outdoor time looks like for middle and high school students? Laura explained that there would be issues related to ensuring safety for high school students outdoors who might want to take advantage of some of the outdoor facilities that exist for students.

Joanna Doria let the committee know that the current language of the policy says that 30-60 minutes within or outside the school day and that was the bigger issue, that it could be 0 minutes during the school day. And, she pointed out that we don't have procedures currently in place to fully implement this policy. And she suggested that outdoor time shouldn't be withheld. She clarified that the priorities were that there be some amount of time that is codified, that there be procedures to ensure they happen, and that it not be withheld.

Laura said that finding procedures that allegedly existed in the past has been very difficult.

Jamie said that we've had trouble finding the procedures that apply to different policies and ideally they would be linked or somehow attached to the bottom of the adopted policy.

Laura pointed out that any child with a 504 or IEP plan, that plan supercedes this policy.

Steve asked how the inability to withhold outdoor time might hinder discipline for behavior that occurs during outdoor, unstructured time. The current language seems too general.

Joanna explained that she had included a Pre-K through 5 caveat to address that. And that there may be other ways to redirect behavior, that kids really need that time.

Joanna also commented that the employee wellness section looks a little sparse, that we should think about where we can do more in policy to speak to the safety and wellness of staff and teachers. Jen Kravitz offered in the spreadsheet a lot of the social skills that would be proactive if you were to focus on that outdoor time.

Jamie suggested that we reach out to someone to help provide input on the employee wellness section. Laura suggested this might be something that could be established through the multi-stakeholder procedure team, and established in procedure. Ellen suggested that we could expand and add to some of the less developed sections without overthinking it.

NEXT STEPS: We will discuss C9 at the next meeting.

4. E20: Community Use of School Facilities

Ellen explained that she has studied our version of this policy removes language from our current E20 policy includes language that requires the use of facilities adheres to the mission and vision of ACSD, and in the VSBA template if that doesn't exist we may be vulnerable to uses of ACSD facilities for uses that could harm students or our community.

E. Public Comment - Any Topic

Mary Slosar of Weybridge pointed out that when we used to approve the agenda at the start of full board meetings, that is also when board members could propose new agenda items.

Mary also shared that related to the Wellness policy, it is clear that the spreadsheet that Laura Nugent sent reflects what building administrators hope is happening versus what is actually happening. This isn't necessarily because anyone is being deceptive, but there might be a disconnect between what should be and what is. It needs to be explicit that recess is not taken away for work or behavioral reasons. There should be caveats that speak to safety included in the Wellness policy. How would a wellness policy be monitored and enforced, given this disconnect between what happens on the ground and what building leaders hope or believe is happening? What would be the on-the-ground ways of implementing the policy as intended.

F. Adjournment

Adjourned at 5:19 pm

Repectfully submitted by Ellen Whelan-Wuest

Move: Steve Orzech Second: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Status: Passed

***Public Comment Guidelines:**

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.