LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience ***in a Public School Setting***

Policy and Communications Committee Meeting
September 10, 2024

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

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Hildie Heck, Athletic Director

Others Present: Bridget Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing; Mary Seidner, Director of Lymes' Youth Service Bureau

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

Communications Update
Mrs. Compagno reviewed the current forms of communication utilized in the classrooms, the schools and at the district level. She asked for input on their value and whether the committee thought sufficient communication was being provided to families, the staff and the community at large.

Classroom Level: ParentSquare notification system, homework reminders, notes, report cards, etc.
School Level: weekly newsletter which include flyers about events in the community, school handbooks.
District Level: quarterly newsletter (*Focus on Education*) to all residents via the *Lyme Times,* mailed to out of town taxpayers and posted on the district website with copies dropped off at town halls and libraries. Monthly Board of Ed newsletter which highlights upcoming Board meetings and Board-related news. Teacher profiles are posted on the website and included in the newsletters. *Events* magazine (the district submits articles to this town newsletter highlighting educational news). District website with a plethora of information. ParentSquare notification system is used for important notices to parents from the superintendent on a district level. Board of Ed meetings are livestreamed. Local media (*Connecticut Examiner* and *LymeLine* routinely feature stories about the district). Social media (District has Instagram and Facebook accounts).

Discussion on improving the *Focus on Education* newsletter included suggestions for new articles besides the standard ones that appear in the budget and graduation issues. The group also discussed ways to distribute the newsletter throughout the community as an insertion in the *Lyme Times* will probably not

continue for very long. There was also discussion on making the newsletter longer with more content and possibly including student-generated content. There was a recommendation to include all staff in the Staff Profiles (not just teachers).

Policy Update
Policy 6145.1 Extracurricular Activities
Mr. Neviaser reviewed revised verbiage in the athletic handbook regarding students and their drug and alcohol free commitment and as it relates to Policy 6145.1 *Extracurricular Activities*. Of note in the changed language is that a student found in the presence of substances in or outside of school, at any point during the calendar year in which they are enrolled in a Region 18 school, may face consequences as outlined in Policy 6145.1. Applying these rules year-round vs. in-season addresses equitable treatment of all students that are involved in extracurricular activities.

Old Language:
Drug and Alcohol Free Commitment
Board of Education Policy 6145.1 should be read and understood by all stakeholders in our athletic programs. There is no place for substance use or abuse on our teams. A player needs to lead a healthy lifestyle in order to perform at their best. Alcohol, tobacco and other illegal drugs are prohibited. The penalties for the violation are spelled out in Policy 6145.1. Students and parents/guardians will be required to sign off on this policy.

New Language:
Drug and Alcohol Free Commitment
It is imperative that all students understand and adhere to our district policy. A student found in the ***presence*** *of illegal substances in or outside of school, including drugs and alcohol, may face consequences as outlined in the Board of Education Policy 6145.1, which should be read and understood by all stakeholders in our athletic programs. There is no place for substance use or abuse on our teams. A player needs to lead a healthy lifestyle in order to perform at their best. Therefore, alcohol, tobacco, performance enhancing supplements and other illegal drugs are strictly prohibited.*

The penalties for violations are clearly defined in Policy 6145.1, and students and their parents/ guardians are required to sign off on this policy to ensure comprehension and compliance. Your support and cooperation in upholding these standards contribute to the well-being and success of our athletes.

Mr. Wygonik and Ms. Heck spoke to the recommended changes which they believed would help students with peer pressure; promote a healthy lifestyle; reflect a no tolerance policy; deter students from using alcohol/drugs; and encourage students to find other constructive things to do in their spare time. In addition, the administration feels that applying these rules year-round vs. in-season addresses equitable treatment of all students that are involved in extracurricular activities.

The committee discussed the punishment (14 calendar day suspension from events/games) and the change to year-round vs. in season timeframe, and there was consensus to approve the recommended changes.

Mr. Neviaser will draft the regulations to Policy 6145.1 *Extracurricular Activities*. As there is no change in the actual policy, he will present the revised regulations to the full Board of Ed at their October 2 meeting.

Policy 4112.5/4212.5 *Reference Checks, Security Checks, Fingerprinting of Employees*. Mr. Neviaser reviewed a CABE revised sample of this policy as the District's current one is outdated and does not comply with newer legislation. It was his recommendation to move forward with the newly worded CABE policy. This will go before the full Board of Ed at their meeting on October 2.

Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline
Mr. Neviaser presented this CABE document for informational purposes only as the district does not need to take action until July 2025. He noted that the District has been implementing restorative practices for many years. Mr. Neviaser will review this document and report back to the committee at their next meeting.

Mr. Neviaser also reported that the school climate and Title IX policies have to be revised, and these will be discussed at a future committee-level meeting.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.