AGENDA –Wednesday, December 11, 2024

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
BOARD OF EDUCATION
6:00 p.m.
(Immediately following the Annual Organizational Meeting)
Newbury Library Media Center

Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education Mission Statement:

We believe the public education is an essential component of a free and democratic society. In a partnership of family, school, community, and local and state government, our mission is to enable all students to meet high standards, make productive choices in their personal lives, contribute to a diverse global society and act as responsible citizens.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 PUBLIC PORTION

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- 3.1 November 13, 2024, Regular Board of Education Meeting

4.0 REPORTS
- 4.1 Student Representatives Report – Amaya Washington, Owen Langer
- 4.2 Principal's Reports – R. Cornelius, G. Franklin
- 4.3 Superintendent's Report: Steven K. LePage
- 4.4 Director of Finance and Operations - J. Gaskins

5.0 OLD BUSINESS
- 5.1 Updates
- 5.2 BOE Goals

6.0 NEW BUSINESS
- 6.1 Discussion and possible formation of a BOE Policy Subcommittee
- 6.2 Review of revised RSD#7 Policy # 5131-81 Electronic Devices - Use of Private Technology Devices by Students (1st reading)

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

8.0 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

Enclosures: November 13, 2024, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes
RSD#7 Policy # 5131-81 Electronic Devices - Use of Private Technology Devices by Students

Next Meeting: January 8, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center ~
January 22, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center ~

We welcome the public to share their comments via publicinput@nwr7.org.Your emails will be considered during the Public Comment session of the meeting. Thank you for your participation.

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

Newbury Library Media Center
Board of Education Meeting
November 13, 2024 - 5:00 p.m.

DRAFT

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), Ms. Mary Duran (B)- arrived late to meeting approximately 6pm, Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, Secretary/ Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), HS Principal Gary Franklin, MS Principal Ryan Cornelius, and Student Rep. Owen Langer.
Absent: Student Rep. Amaya Washington.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Regular Board of Education meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

PUBLIC PORTION: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to APPROVE the September 11, 2024, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Mr. Jerram, and Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to APPROVE the October 9, 2024, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes, as amended. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Crone, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, and Ms. Bell. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to APPROVE the October 9, 2024, Regular Building Committee Meeting Minutes, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell, and Ms. Fragale. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Sexton Read, to APPROVE the October 30, 2024, Regular Personal Electronic Device Subcommittee Meeting Minutes, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Mr. Jerram, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson, Mr. Gauthier, and Ms. Bell. MOTION PASSED

REPORTS

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS- Owen Langer

HS Sports & Theater: The boys' soccer team is going to State Finals! Registration for all other winter sports is starting now. Theater's "Sleepy Hollow" will be showing on November 22 through the 24th at 7pm. Tickets are available for purchase.

VoAg: Students from our AG Program went to Indianapolis to compete in Mechanics at National Level.

House of Heros: As spoken about at the previous meeting, a group of students assisted a local veteran out of Winsted in cleaning up his yard. WTNH and Channel 8 came out and interviewed some of the participants.

HS PRINCIPAL REPORT- Mr. Gary Franklin

HS Data Report: Mr. Franklin shared the results from thePSATs and SATs over the last couple of years. While the trends for each cohort show growth over time, there is some decline year over year between cohorts. The information is being used to develop plans to address improving the students' performance.

NGSS: Dr.DeCerbo shared data from the results of the standardized science exam. He explained the ways in which the science courses are being realigned to ensure that all areas of the exam are covered. He also discussed the current AP offerings and possible expansion.

MS PRINCIPAL REPORT- Mr. Ryan Cornelius

MS Data Report: Mr. Cornelius shared the results of the testing done in the middle school. He described the ways in which the data is being used to identify specific skills the students need support in. He introduced the plan to use iReady as a screening tool which will provide better information. He is in the process of identifying available resources and working to find ways to build a system that will more efficiently deploy these resources to meet the needs of students.

Future Improvements; Mr. Cornelius voiced that he plans to continue working on refining MTSS to better assist the students and their needs. He described his plan to develop several new features within the system to better serve the students; these may include: universal grading policies, schedule arrangements to meet extra class help needs, and an ELA Tier program targeted to be operational for the next school year. Brief discussion followed.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

House of Hero's / Veteran's Day: Following up on what Student Rep. Owen Langer stated the House of Hero's project went extremely well and he is proud to announce that the district will be doing more projects with the program in the future. Along with cleaning up a Veteran's yard the school hosted a Veteran's Day breakfast. There was a great turn out, some of our very own NWR7 staff was recognized for their service. Overall both events were fantastic!

Personal Electronic Device Policy Update: Mr. LePage gave a brief overview of the second subcommittee meeting. The survey results were discussed by the committee. A consensus grew out of those conversations for expanding the current policy of no phones during class to explicitly cover the entire instructional time period, in the classroom and outside of it. The committee also supported the idea of each classroom having a place to hold the students' phones during class. The timing of the implementation was discussed. A draft of the policy will be brought to the whole BOE at the December meeting.

Building Committee Update: Briefly discussed ideas of construction for the ongoing Retaining wall project along with the possible combination of the Greenhouse with Hydroponics.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Transportation Renewal Contracts: All transportation companies should be providing their quotes for the upcoming renewals, all contracts should be in by Thanksgiving for review. At this time, we are open to new bids specifically for the Town of New Hartford.

Budget Update: The budget is in progress, input is being provided by staff and administrators.

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to APPROVE the updated version of Policy #4000 Title XI as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Crone, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran, and Ms. Kenneson. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to ACCEPT the Proposed 2025/2026 School Year Calendar, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, and Ms. Duran. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED

NEW BUSINESS

MOU: An MOU was signed by Superintendent LePage and submitted to the Winchester Youth Service Bureau. The MOU formalizes our partnership with WYS as we both work to provide students with the support they need.

CORRESPONDENCE
None.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell to CANCEL the November 27, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, and Ms. Kenneson. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS
None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to ADJOURN at 6:30 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.

The next BOE Meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Vacila
Board Clerk

Students

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

The Northwestern Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education believes that students who feel emotionally and intellectually safe in their school environment are more likely to engage in their learning and reach their fullest potential. Emerging research suggests that social media significantly negatively impacts brain development during adolescence when identities and a sense of self-worth are forming, and social rewards, pressures, and acceptance are paramount.

This research, as well as the addictive algorithms embedded in social media platforms themselves, is of concern to the Board, as the Board recognizes that the technology that allows unfettered access to social media interferes with the opportunities the District provides to ensure students benefit from school environments that build skills in social interaction and communication, provide for stimulating intellectual engagement in the classroom, and support peer-to-peer/adult relationship building.

Thus, to safeguard the learning environment and enhance system-wide opportunities for student academic success and overall well-being, the Northwestern Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education shall restrict the use of personal technology in all district schools and provide the following guidance to the Superintendent in working with his/her staff, students, and parents/guardians in establishing administrative regulations that differentiate among middle, and high school levels at Northwestern Regional.

The Board fully recognizes that a collective response is required to ensure all members of the community join together to ensure all students have full access to the District curriculum, the day-to-day instructional opportunities, healthy and constructive peer-to peer relationships and the foundational skills and attitudes that help promote effective digital citizenship.

Definitions:
Restrictions means limiting conditions or the limitation or control of someone or something.

Personal Device means any device owned by an individual with the capability to process, store, transmit, or access information independently. This includes but is not limited to mobile phones, smartphones, smart watches, tablets, PCs, laptops, and cameras.

Collective Action means an action taken together by a group of people (Board of Education, Administration, Staff, Students, and Parents/Caregivers) to achieve a common objective (limit distractions and addictive algorithms embedded in social media apps).

Policy Adopted:

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices (continued)

Policy Implementation Guidelines:

- Emphasis shall be placed on creating engaging learning spaces to mitigate the negative impact that personal devices have on student learning.
- Consideration shall be made for specific middle, and high school practices based on developmental readiness and maturity.

Middle School

- Practices shall focus on removing personal devices from the school day or classroom. Specific procedures for isolating personal devices upon arrival at school shall be effectively explained to middle school students and parents considering the specific developmental characteristics of the young adolescent's need for increased autonomy and independence during the school day, and concerns related to access to social media's addictive algorithms.

High School

- Practices shall focus on restricting cell phone use in the classroom unless determined by the teacher as necessary for instructional purposes.
- Practices will also prohibit the use of cell phones in hallways during instructional periods throughout the day.
- Regulations will specify settings in which cell phones and personal electronic devices may be used within the school facilities during the school day
- Practices that ensure appropriate filters are in place mitigate illegal use and access to inappropriate sites.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Responsibilities of School Leaders in Supporting the Implementation of and Adherence to the District Policy: (continued)

Personal Technology Use Policy:

- The Board and the Superintendent shall engage and elicit feedback from school leaders, educators, families, students, and relevant stakeholders in developing and adopting a policy that aims to mitigate the negative impact of unrestricted access to personal technology in the District's schools.
- The Superintendent shall develop administrative regulations that align with the policy and provide for the professional learning of all school staff in implementing the policy. The Board shall ensure that the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy foundation is districtwide in its vision, scope, and implementation.
- The Superintendent shall develop a "digital educational strategy" that provides a systemic approach toward developing digital literacy and citizenship to ensure that it is comprehensive and equips all students with the skills and tools necessary to safely navigate online spaces.
- The Superintendent shall work with his/her team to assist families in understanding healthy uses of technology, setting ground rules, utilizing parental controls on devices, and ways to monitor technology use.
- The Board shall review and update the district policy to address needs related to future technological devices, online platforms, emerging threats and legislative and court action.

Responsibilities of School Leaders in Supporting the Implementation of and Adherence to the District Policy:

- Engage educators, families, and students in an introduction to the Personal Technology Use in Schools Policy that is sensitive to the concerns of all involved.
- Support educators in learning about the policy and the consistent, uniform application and enforcement of the district policy and associated regulations.
- Provide educators with professional development on best practices for incorporating technology into classroom lessons and activities using authorized school-issued devices.
- Develop and implement a graduated response to inappropriate personal technology use that encourages students to see the value in a "cell-phone-free" space and creates opportunities to develop positive skills related to technology use.
- Create a process for exceptions to the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy based on a student's specific needs and as appropriate according to each student's individualized education plan (IEP), Section 504 accommodations, individualized health care plan, or learning plan.
- Incorporate digital citizenship education content and skills as part of the curricula.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Responsibilities of School Leaders in Supporting the Implementation of and Adherence to the District Policy: (continued)

Teachers and Staff:

- Recognize that impulse control is a skill that needs to be developed and that students require support and instruction to establish healthy and responsible relationships with technology and social media.
- Create engaging lessons that foster in-person group work and collaboration among peers to strengthen students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication. Model the digital habits and the utilization of personal technology and social media in alignment with the district policy.
- Fully engage in professional development learning opportunities related to supporting positive digital habits, digital citizenship, and integrating the effective use of technology in the classroom.

Families and Caregivers:

- Promote student engagement in learning by refraining from communicating with students via personal devices during the school day and encourage children to use planning and problem-solving skills, coping strategies, and in-school supports to help foster independence.
    - For emergency situations requiring parents/guardians to contact their child(ren) during school hours, parents/guardians should call:
        - Main Office: 860.379.8525
        - House #1 Office: 860.379.7027
        - House #2 Office: 860.379.7132
        - Ag-Ed Office: 860.379.9013
    - For emergency situations, students would be called from class as quickly as possible and allowed to contact their parents/guardians from one of the office locations.
    - Parents may also send non-emergency messages to their child's email for their child to view at an acceptable time.
- Support school initiatives to create technology-free spaces that allow students to fully participate in their education while encouraging in-person connections with peers and Adults.
- Model a healthy relationship with social media and screen time at home and reduce the use of technology as a tool for occupying young children. Consider using age-appropriate parental controls on smartphones to encourage the development of healthy relationships with technology.

Policy Adopted:

Students:

- Participate in opportunities to provide feedback in the development of the District's policy and grade-band specific regulations as appropriate.
- Follow the District's Personal Technology Use in Schools policy and the student Code of Conduct.
- Engage in lessons and classroom discussions related to social and emotional learning, digital citizenship, media literacy, and the responsible use of technology.
- Encourage peers to use technology and social media appropriately, including being aware of and limiting the frequency in which they check their cell phones. ● Report concerning and inappropriate cell phone use and online behavior by peers to a principal, teacher, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, or any trusted adult in the school building.

  (cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
  (cf. 5131.8 – Off School Grounds Misconduct)
  (cf. 5131.82 – Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material) (cf. 5131.911 – Connecticut School Climate Policy)
  (cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
  (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
  (cf. 5145.44 – Title IX/Sexual Harassment)
  (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-233j Student possession and use of telecommunications devices

Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir 1971)

Trachtman v. Anker, 563 F. 2d 512 (2nd Cir. 1977) cert. denied, 435 U.S. 925 (1978)

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S Ct 562 (1988)

Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 US 675 (1986)

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community Dist., 393 US 503, (1969)

Policy Adopted:

Separate PDF File:

5131.81 Connecticut State Department of Education Position Statement

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/board/position_statement_cell_phone_use.pdf

Policy Adopted: