LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

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

Policy and Communications Committee Meeting
February 11, 2025

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

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools

Others Present: Bridget Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Communications Update
Mrs. Compagno reported on a newly created "Communications" page on the website which can be found here: https://www.region18.org/district-information/communications. This page gives an overview of the various means of communications (district, school, classroom) and how to stay informed.

Mrs. Compagno reported that the next edition of the *Focus on Education* newsletter will go out in approximately a month, and she highlighted the articles that will be featured in that edition. The spring edition features the 2025-2026 budget and goes out three weeks before the referendum. There was a suggestion to add a story on the PK-8 building project and on student enrollment so that misconceptions are being addressed, i.e., why cutting staff but adding an addition at Mile Creek School.

Mrs. Compagno reported upcoming communication improvements such as refreshing the photography in ads, website, etc., and creating an instructional video for using ParentSquare. Some additional suggestions recommended by committee members included advertising that Board meetings can be viewed live and via YouTube and using a pleasing background when taking photos at Board meetings.

Title IX Policy
Mr. Neviaser shared the following:
On January 9, 2025, a federal district court in Kentucky ruled that the 2024 Title IX Regulations "are invalid and must be set aside." In response, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued guidance indicating, "Consistent with the court's order, the 2024 Title IX Regulations are

not effective in any jurisdiction." Districts are advised to discontinue the use of policies and regulations that follow the 2024 Title IX Regulations and resume using policies and regulations that were in place under the 2020 Regulations.

The April 19, 2024 "Final Rule" that went into effect on August 1, 2024, redefined sexual harassment and broadened the scope of sex discrimination to include sex stereotyping, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Eastern District of Kentucky found that the 2024 Final Rule exceeded the DOE's authority under Title IX, violated the First Amendment and the Spending Clause of the U.S. Constitution and was unlawfully vague, overbroad and arbitrary.

Due to this ruling, the district will transition back to the 2020 Title IX policy. Mr. Neviaser is waiting for Shipman and Goodwin to send their recommended version.

Institutional Neutrality Policy

Mr. Neviaser reviewed CABE's model "optional" policy #0521.3 on *Institutional Neutrality* for the purpose of providing boards and superintendents guidance on posting position statements that take stances on a variety of significant and often troubling local, national and world events. CABE believes that an effective policy may be another tool for boards to emphasize and keep central their commitment to providing safe spaces for student learning. Mr. Neviaser concurred that this issue should be codified with a policy. He will also compare this CABE policy with current Board Policy 6144 *Controversial Issues* to see if there are any overlapping verbiage. It was Mr. Neviaser's opinion that Policy 6144 is more geared toward instruction and what happens in the classroom. Further discussion on these policies will take place at the March 11 Policy and Communications Committee meeting.

Mr. Neviaser also shared an email he sent to all staff on September 9, 2024 reminding them that as public employees, we must remain neutral in all political matters. "No matter what our personal political beliefs are, we cannot pick sides as the public funding we receive represents numerous political positions that all have the same right to a fair and unbiased education for the children of our communities. All employees must refrain from expressing their views while performing their duties for the district."

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.