AGENDA –Wednesday, February 26, 2025

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
BOARD OF EDUCATION
6:00 p.m.
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 February 12, 2025, Regular Board of Education Meeting

4.0 PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL 2025-2026

5.0 OLD BUSINESS
- 5.1 Discussion/Second Reading and possible approval of RSD#7 Graduation Policy
- 5.2 Discussion/Second Reading and possible approval of RSD#7 School Climate Policy
- 5.3 Discussion/Second Reading and possible approval of RSD#7 Restorative Practices Policy

6.0 NEW BUSINESS
- 6.1 Action - Motion(s) for Closure of a Bank Account/Transfer of Funds ~ Adele Winn Memorial Scholarship

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

8.0 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

Enclosures: February 12, 2025 Regular BOE Meeting Minutes
RSD#7 Graduation Policy, School Climate Policy, and Restorative Practices Policy

Next Meeting:	*March 5, 2025*	*@ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center ~Budget Workshop Special Meeting*
	March 12, 2025	*@ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center ~*
	March 15, 2025	*@ 8:00 a.m. – Budget Workshop New Hartford BOF- New Hartford Town Hall*
	March 19, 2025	*@ 6:00 p.m. – First Town Budget Presentation ~ Colebrook*
	March 26, 2025	*@ 6:30 p.m. – Second Town Budget Presentation ~ Norfolk*
	April 1, 2025	*@ 7:00 p.m. – Third Town Budget Presentation ~ New Hartford*

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
February 12, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
DRAFT

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary / Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Ms. Mary Duran (B)**,** Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, HS Principal Gary Franklin, MS Principal Ryan Cornelius, and Student Representatives Amaya Washington and Owen Langer.
Absent: None.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Regular Board of Education meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC PORTION: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** the January 22nd, 2025 Meeting Minutes as presented. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran. **MOTION PASSED**.

REPORTS

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS- Amaya Washington & Owen Langer

Updates: Feedback from student body regarding Personal Electronic Devices and SmartPass: students overall feel it works and administration along with staff made the transition easy. Although there does seem to be some mild frustration amongst the upperclassmen. There was more discomfort directed towards SmartPass as the sign in and out process was not as smooth as initially anticipated. Since the rollout of these policies students have acknowledged improvements with utilizing the system after a few weeks.

Winter Sports: Madelyn (Maddie) Topa scored her 2000th point in the game of Northwestern vs. Gilbert! So far the girls have a 15-4 season.

HS PRINCIPAL REPORT- Mr. Gary Franklin

SmartPass/ Phone "Hotel" Update: All classrooms have officially been fitted with their own telephone "hotels". This transition has been slow, but positive. The media center will be utilizing its own pass system to alleviate any SmartPass system jams or pass issues as this was a noted issue with the initial roll out of the SmartPass system.

HS Update: Highlander welcome night was on February 11th for our 8th graders. Administration was able to speak with the upcoming HS students.

Music Department: The planned upcoming trip will soon be unveiled to students and families.

MS PRINCIPAL REPORT- Mr. Ryan Cornelius

MTSS Updates: Rough outline of reading program has been produced. Brief discussion about what the tiers of intervention would be and how they will help provide the best support for any student struggling with reading or mathematics.

iReady Update: Approximately two weeks ago results came in and showed that the MS is in need of the MTSS program. Mr. Cornelius emphasized how this program will help struggling students improve their skills and get them any support they may need.

Digital Citizenship: A State Trooper and SRO Stan Lada will educate the students on safety and the potential consequences of being on social media, online gaming, and utilizing AI.

MS Updates: Counselors are hard at work to transition the 8th grade class to HS, as well as onboarding the new incoming 7th grade class to MS.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Graduation: Graduation date is confirmed: June 12th, 2025!

First Readings: Brief discussion about the following policies: Policies #4146, #5131.911, #5144.12(a).

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Transportation Contracts Update: The board was asked to accept the All-Star Transportation contract for the towns of Colebrook and Norfolk.

Vo-AG Roof Update: Meeting and Plan review went very well; job went out to bid as of February 6th 2025. Targeting a pre bid walkthrough for February 25th 2025 with open bidding to follow approximately March 12th 2025. The finance department is still in the process of solidifying a bid and is hoping to accept one near the March 12th 2025 date.

Vo-Ag Bus Grant: A request was made to approve the final payment to complete the Vo-Ag Activity Bus project.

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADOPT Policy 1340:** The Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Fragale, **to ADOPT Policy 1700:** The Deadly Weapons or Firearms Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **ADOPT Policy 1320:** The Green Cleaning Program, to be issued as Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **ADOPT Policy 1301:** The Non-Discrimination Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADOPT Policy 1322:** The Pesticide Application on School Property Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADOPT Policy 1600:** The Security and Safety Plan as Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **ADOPT Policy 1331:** The Smoking on School Property Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **ADOPT Policy 1330:** The Use of School Facilities Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Duran, to keep the existing **Policy 1316** (Public Conduct at School Activities) in place, and also **ADOPT Policy 1111:** The Visitor Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **ADOPT Policy 1110.1:** The Volunteer Policy, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADOPT updated Policy 1400:** Distribution of Materials by Students**,** as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **REMOVE Policies**: **#1220, #1260, #1312, #1322, #1324, and #1110.1** from current district policies, as discussed, since they are no longer necessary or relevant. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ACCEPT** the completion of the Vo-AG Activity Bus Project. The Regional School District No.7 hereby accepts as complete Vo-Ag Activity Bus Project No: 22DASY207031VE0522 and authorizes the Director of Finance to 1) make final payments to New England Transit Sales, Inc. and 2) submit a request for final payment to The Connecticut Department of Administrative Services for reimbursement of the Vo-Ag Activity Bus Project No: 22DASY207031VE0522 and final acceptance of the project as complete (and any further notices required for the same). **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **APPROVE** The All-Star 5-year transportation contract for Norfolk and Colebrook, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

First Readings: Brief discussion about the following policies: Policies #4146 RSD#7 Graduation Policy, #5131.911 School Climate Policy, and #5144.12(a) Restorative Practice Policy.

CORRESPONDENCE

Volleyball Camp Request: Coach Adam Vaccari requested the use of RSD7's gymnasium to host a volleyball camp starting August 4th through the 7th.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** the Volleyball camp dated for August 4th – 7th 2025 in the school's gymnasium, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS
None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to go into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 7:28 p.m**. AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **APPROVE** the increase of the Superintendent's salary for 2025-2026 to reflect the average increase of the current administrator's three-year contract. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **ADJOURN** at 7:55 p.m. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

The next BOE Meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Vacila
Board Clerk

P-6146
Instruction

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to satisfy the high school graduation requirements within Northwestern Regional School District No. 7, a student must have satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of study; demonstrated proficiency in basic skills identified by the Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education (the "Board"); satisfied the legally mandated number and distribution of credits required to graduate from high school; and if graduating in 2025 and thereafter, satisfied the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA") requirements detailed below.

Required Coursework and Credits for Graduation

The Board conforms with state law regarding credits for graduation from high school.

Requirements of classes graduating in 2025 & 2026, and from 2027 and beyond:

Minimum State Requirements (PA 17-42) 25 Credits	Region 7 Class of 2025 and 2026 25 Credits	Region 7 Class of 2027 and Beyond 25 Credits
Humanities *9 credits, including:* *1.0 U.S. History* *0.5 Civics*	English - 4 Credits Social Studies - 3 Credits (1.0 must be in U.S. History and 0.5 must be in Civics) Humanities Electives - 2 Credits	English - 4 Credits Social Studies - 3 Credits (1.0 must be in U.S. History and 0.5 must be in Civics) Humanities Electives - 2 Credits
STEM *(Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)* *9 credits*	Math - 3 Credits Science - 3 Credits (1.0 must be in Biology) STEM Electives - 3 Credits	Math - 3 Credits Science - 3 Credits (1.0 must be in Biology) STEM Electives - 3 Credits (0.5 must be in Personal Finance)
Physical Education & Wellness *1 credit*	Physical Education - 1 Credit	Physical Education - 1 Credit
Health & Safety	Wellness & Safety - 1	Wellness & Safety - 1

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1 credit	Credit	Credit
World Language *1 credit*	World Language - 1 Credit	World Language - 1 Credit
Other Coursework	Mastery Based Diploma Capstone Assessment - 1 Credit	FAFSA Completion*
Electives *3 or 4 credits*	Electives - 3 Credits	Electives - 4 Credits
Total Credits - 25	**Total - 25**	**Total - 25**

*Pursuant to sections 319 and 320 of Public Act 23-204, starting with the class of 2027, all students and their families must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or related CSDE waiver in order to be eligible for graduation. School counselors will assist in facilitating the completion of the FAFSA or waiver during a student's 12th grade year. Please visit the CSDE website for more information regarding this requirement and waiver.

A student who presents written documentation from a physician or advanced practice registered nurse stating that participation in physical education is not advisable because of the physical condition of the student, shall be excused from the physical education requirement. In such a case, another subject must be substituted.

Any student who is deaf or hearing impaired may be exempted from any world language graduation requirement if the student's parent or guardian requests such exemption in writing.

A credit is defined as the equivalent of one forty (40) minute class period for each school day of a school year. One-half credit is granted for a course with a forty (40) minute class period each school day for one semester or ninety (90) days.

Only courses taken in grades nine to twelve inclusive, and that are in accordance with the state-wide subject matter content standards, adopted by the State Board of Education, shall satisfy the above graduation requirements, except that the Board will grant a student credit:

High school graduation credit will be granted to students upon the successful demonstration of mastery of subject matter achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provide flexible and multiple pathways to learning, including:

- Cross-curricular graduation requirements,
- Career and technical education,
- Virtual learning,
- Work-based learning,
- Service learning,
- Dual enrollment and early college

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- Courses taken in middle school, and
- Internships and student-designed independent studies;

(Provided that such demonstration of mastery is in accordance with such state-wide subject matter content standards.)

High school graduation credit will be granted to students who successfully complete a high school aligned world language course during 8th grade. In addition, a high school graduation credit will be granted to 8th grade students who earn a C- or better in the high school aligned Algebra I course.

High school graduation credit may also be granted to students for coursework that is pre-approved by the high school principal, for successful completion of courses not offered at Northwestern Regional Schools. Such courses must be completed during the school year or summer months at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited.

FAFSA Requirement for Classes Graduating in 2027 and Thereafter

Students graduating in 2027 and beyond are required to have satisfied one of the following prior to graduation:

(1) completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA");
(2) for students without legal immigration status, completed and submitted to a public institution of higher education an application for institutional financial aid; or
(3) completed a waiver of completion of the FAFSA and/or financial aid application, as applicable, on a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, signed by the student's parent or guardian or signed by the student if the student is eighteen or older.

On and after March 15 of each school year, a principal, school counselor, teacher, or other certified educator may complete the waiver on behalf of any student who has not satisfied the above requirements if such principal, school counselor, teacher, or other certified educator affirms that they have made a good faith effort to contact the parent/guardian or student about completion of such applications.

Graduation During Period of Expulsion

A student may graduate during an expulsion period if the Board determines that the student has completed the necessary credits required for graduation.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-14n

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-16b

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-221a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-223a

Public Act No. 23-21, "An Act Concerning Financial Literacy Instruction"

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Public Act No. 23-204, “An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefor, and Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget”

Public Act No. 23-167, “An Act Concerning Transparency in Education”

ADOPTED: _____
REVISED: _____

9/25/2023

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Graduation Requirement Considerations:

1. Credits earned in Accounting I and/or Accounting II may be applied toward fulfilling the mathematics or STEM requirement. Credit for Personal Finance may be applied toward graduation requirements in either mathematics or STEM.

2. A maximum of one credit may be earned for graduation requirements in Social Studies by successfully completing the following courses: Economics, Business Law, UConn Microeconomics, and UConn Macroeconomics.

3. Agricultural Education students who successfully complete certain approved courses in Agricultural Education will receive science credit.

4. The credit earned in Contemporary Issues, Law and Justice or AP US Gov and Politics may be applied toward fulfilling the Civics requirement.

5. Sequential courses in all subject areas require the student to pass the first course in the sequence before he or she may take the next course. For instance, English II may not be taken until English I has been passed.

6. One credit will be awarded for the successful completion of a full year study of a World Language at the middle school. This credit will count towards the graduation requirements and will display on the high school transcript, however, it is not included in the GPA calculation.

7. One credit will be awarded for the successful completion of Algebra I at the middle school, provided the student earns a grade of C- or better. This credit will count towards the graduation requirements and will display on the high school transcript, however, it is not included in the GPA calculation.

8. Upon prior approval of the Principal, credits earned from an accredited post-secondary institution may be counted toward the credits required to earn a diploma. A typical college course is worth 3 credits. By statute, a high school can award one half credit for successfully completing a college course approved by the principal. These credits will not however be included in the accumulated GPA.

In pursuit of the above graduation requirements, a student should follow the minimums in making course selections:

Grade 9	*6.5 Credits* (English, Math, Social Studies, Science, PE, Health, 1.5 add'll electives)
Grade 10	*6.5 Credits* (English, Math, Social Studies, Science, PE, Health, 1.5 add'l electives)

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Grade 11	*6.0 Credits* (English, Math, U.S. History, PE, Health, Personal Finance, 2 add'l electives)
Grade 12	*5.5 Credits* (English, PE, Health, 2 add'l core courses, 2.0 add'l electives)

PROGRESSION TOWARDS GRADUATION:

Successful progression to each grade will be determined by the number of credits earned. Acquisition of these minimum number of credits each year will ensure that the student is on track to graduate with their class.

Progression to Grade 10	*6.0 Credits*
Progression to Grade 11	*12.5 Credits*
Progression to Grade 12	*18.5 Credits*

TRANSFER STUDENTS:

A student who transfers into Northwestern Regional High School must meet the school's graduation requirements and earn at least three (3) credits of work at Northwestern Regional High School to be eligible to graduate with a NWR7 High School diploma. Only course work completed at Northwestern Regional High School is calculated into the student's GPA. Course work completed in other secondary schools will be included in the student's permanent record as copies of that school's transcript. These courses will be displayed on the Northwestern transcript for college application purposes even though they are not factored into the GPA. Students who transfer after the 1st semester of their freshman year are excluded from class rank.

EARLY GRADUATION COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:

Northwestern Regional does not encourage students to complete the high school program in less than four full years. Only situations of extreme and/or unusual circumstance will be considered by the school administration for possible early graduation. Petition for such early graduation must be made to the school principal through the student's school counselor prior to June 1 of the student's junior year.

(Alternative) **EARLY GRADUATION COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS**:

Some Northwestern Regional students, through consistent academic commitment and extra effort, may be able to complete high school graduation requirements in less than

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four full years. Students who have earned this opportunity may petition for early graduation through their school counselor prior to June 1 of the student's junior year. Consideration and approval of requests for early graduation will be made by the high school principal.

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This Connecticut School Climate Policy was developed by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) with technical and substantive guidance from the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO) and other members of the statewide Social Emotional Learning and School Climate Collaborative.[1]

The policy was developed to provide districts guidance on recent revisions to Connecticut's school climate law, Public Act 23-167. In accordance with Public Act 23-167, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education, for the school years commencing July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024, each local and regional board of education **may adopt** and implement the Connecticut School Climate Policy, in lieu of implementing the provisions of sections 10-222d, 10-222g to 10-222i, inclusive, 10-222k and 10-222p of the general statutes.

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, **each local and regional board of education shall adopt** and implement the Connecticut School Climate Policy.

This policy **does not modify or eliminate** any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including any constitutional and civil rights protections or any other applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements.

[1] Chapter 170 - Boards of Education (ct.gov)

P-5131.911

Connecticut School Climate Policy
Updated October 2023

Policy Statement

All schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success.

Implementation of the following set of guiding principles and systemic strategies will promote a positive school climate, which is essential to achieving these goals.

This policy sets forth the framework for an effective and informed school climate improvement process, which includes a continuous cycle of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, and (iv) implementation, and serves to actualize the Connecticut School Climate Standards, as detailed herein.

The Board recognizes that improving school climate is contextual. Each school needs to consider its history, strengths, needs, and goals. Furthermore, this policy will support and promote the development of restorative action plans that will create and sustain safe and equitable learning environments.

The Northwestern Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education adopts this policy.

Definitions:

(1) "School climate" means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.

(2) “Positive Sustained School Climate” is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:

a. Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.
b. People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected and solve problems restoratively.
c. A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.
d. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
e. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

(1) "Social and emotional learning" means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social
awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

(1) "Emotional intelligence" means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.

(4) "Bullying" means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

(5) "School environment" means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.

(6) "Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any other electronic communication.

(7) "Teen dating violence" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

(8) "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop
computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

(9) "Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectric or photo-optical system.

(10) "School climate improvement plan" means a building-specific plan developed by the school climate committee, in collaboration with the school climate specialist, using school climate survey data and any other relevant information, through a process that engages all members of the school community and involves such members in a series of overlapping systemic improvements, school-wide instructional practices and relational practices that prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment.

(1) "Restorative practices" means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community, digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any other electronic communication.

(2) "School climate survey" means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant languages of the members of the school community, that measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan.

(3) "Connecticut school climate policy" means the school climate policy developed, updated and approved by an association in the state that represents boards of education and adopted by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established

(4) pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, that provides a framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process that serves to implement Connecticut school climate standards, and includes a continuous cycle of (A) planning and preparation, (B) evaluation, (C) action planning, and (D) implementation.

(1) "School climate improvement plan" means a building-specific plan developed by the school climate committee, in collaboration with the school climate specialist, using school climate survey data and any other relevant information, through a process that engages all members of the school community and involves such members in a series of overlapping systemic improvements, school-wide instructional practices and relational practices that prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment.

(1) "Restorative practices" means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

(2) "School climate survey" means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant
languages of the members of the school community, that measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan.

(3) "Connecticut school climate policy" means the school climate policy developed, updated and approved by an association in the state that represents boards of education and adopted by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established

(4) pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, that provides a framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process that serves to implement Connecticut school climate standards, and includes a continuous cycle of (A) planning and preparation, (B) evaluation, (C) action planning, and (D) implementation

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(14) "School employee" means (A) a teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, school superintendent, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, paraeducator or coach employed by a local or regional board of education, or (B) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public school, pursuant to a contract with a local or regional board of education.

(5) "School community" means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families,
members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

(6) "Challenging behavior" means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

(15) “Evidence Based Practices” in education refers to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.

(7) “Effective School Climate Improvement” is a restorative process that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:

(A) Promoting decision-making that is collaborative and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;

(A) Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., school climate survey, discipline data) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive and intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;

(A) Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students, educators, and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;

(A) Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity building among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;

(E) Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning and adult barriers to teaching; and

(A) Strengthening policies and procedures related to:

a. climate and restorative informed teaching and learning environments.

a. infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning.

a. implementation of school climate improvement plans with the goal of becoming restorative.

b. evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and

b. sustainability of school climate and restorative improvement efforts.

School Climate Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the superintendent of schools for each school district, or an administrator appointed by the superintendent, shall serve as the school climate coordinator for the school district.

The school climate coordinator shall be responsible for:

(1) providing district-level leadership and support for the implementation of the school climate improvement plan for each school.

(1) collaborating with the school climate specialist, for each school to (A) develop a continuum of strategies to prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment, and (B) communicate such strategies to the school community, including, but not limited to, through publication in the district student handbook;

(1) collecting and maintaining data regarding school climate improvement, including, but not limited to, school discipline records, school climate assessments, attendance rates, social and emotional learning assessments, academic growth data, types and numbers of alleged and verified bullying complaints submitted by members of the school community, types and numbers of challenging behaviors addressed using the restorative practices response policy, and data

concerning the implementation and outcome of restorative practices, and

(4) meeting with the school climate specialist for each school at least twice during the school year to (A) identify strategies to improve school climate, including, but not limited to, by responding to challenging behavior and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, such as restorative practices, (B) propose recommendations for revisions to the school climate improvement plan, and (C) assist with the completion of the school climate survey.

School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the principal of each school, or a school employee who holds professional certification pursuant to section 10-145 of the general statutes, is trained in school climate improvement or restorative practices and is designated as the school climate specialist by the school principal, shall serve as the school climate specialist for the school.

The school climate specialist shall be responsible for:

(1) leading in the prevention, identification, and response to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, reports of alleged bullying and harassment.

(1)implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices.

(1) scheduling meetings for and leading the school climate committee; and

(2) leading the implementation of the school climate improvement plan.

School Climate Committee

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, each school climate specialist shall appoint members to the school climate committee who are diverse, including members who are racially, culturally, and linguistically representative of various roles in the school community.

The school climate committee shall consist of:

(1) the school climate specialist.

(1) a teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b of the general statutes.

(3) a demographically representative group of students enrolled at the school, as developmentally appropriate.

(4) families of students enrolled at the school; and

(1) at least two members of the school community, as determined by the school climate specialist.

Membership of the school climate committee shall be annually reviewed and approved by the school climate specialist, in coordination with the school climate coordinator.

The school climate committee shall be responsible for:

(1) assisting in the development, annual scheduling, and administration of the school climate survey, and reviewing of the school climate survey data.

(1) using the school climate survey data to identify strengths and challenges to improve school climate, and to create or propose revisions to the school climate improvement plan.

(2) assisting in the implementation of the school climate improvement plan and recommending any improvements or revisions to the plan.

(1) advising on strategies to improve school climate and implementing evidence and research- based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices, in the school community.

(1) annually providing notice of the uniform challenging behavior and/or bullying complaint form, or similar complaint form used by the school, to the school community.

School Climate Survey

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and biennially thereafter, the school climate committee, for each school, shall administer a school climate survey to students, school employees and families of students, provided the parent or guardian of each student shall receive prior written notice of the content and administration of such school climate survey and shall have a reasonable opportunity to opt such student out of such school climate survey.

School Climate Improvement Plan

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the school climate specialist, for each school, in collaboration with the school climate coordinator, shall develop, and update as necessary, a school climate improvement plan. Such plan shall be based on the results of the school climate survey, any recommendations from the school climate committee, including

the protocols, supports, and any other data the school climate specialist and school climate coordinator deem relevant. Such plan shall be submitted to the school climate coordinator for review and approval on or before December thirty-first of each school year. Upon approval of such plan, a written or electronic copy of such plan shall be made available to members of the school community and such plan shall be used in the prevention of, identification of and response to all challenging behavior.

Additionally, districts may place the school climate improvement plans into their district and school improvement plans.

Training

For the school year commencing July 1, 2024, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall provide resources and training to school employees regarding:

(1) social and emotional learning.

(2) school climate and culture and evidence and research-based interventions; and

(3) restorative practices.

Such resources and training may be made available at each school under the jurisdiction of such board and include technical assistance in the implementation of a school climate improvement plan. Any school employee may participate in any such training offered by the board under this section. The school climate coordinator, shall select, and approve, the individuals or organizations that will provide such training.

Funding

The school district shall in its discretion allocate sufficient funding to satisfy the requirements of this policy for all schools in the district. Such funding shall be distributed accordingly, with Superintendent approval, for assessments and professional development, as well as for school community outreach, training, and technical assistance.

Accountability

The Board shall adopt and allocate adequate resources to support the Connecticut School Climate Policy and adhere to state regulations set forth in Public Act 23-167.

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Connecticut School Climate Standards

1. The school district community[2] has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate[3] that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to *all* challenging behavior[4].

1. The school district community adopts policies that promote:
   a) a sound school environment that the develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and
   b) a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally re- engaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.

2. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to:
   a) promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students.
   a) enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities.
   b) address barriers to teaching and learning; and
   b) develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.

1. The school community creates a school environment[5] where *everyone* is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities.

2. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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[2] School Community means any individuals, groups or businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

[3] School climate means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life, and that reflects the norms, goals, values and interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.

[4] Challenging behavior means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

[5] School environment means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs if bullying at or during such other activities, functions, or programs negatively impacts the school environment.

P5144.12(a)

Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response

Introduction

Related to all matters of student discipline, the Board of Education requires district staff to make every effort to correct student challenging behavior through school-based resources and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school climate and avoid challenging behavior.

For most behaviors, schools should minimize the use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, recommendations for expulsion, and referrals to law enforcement to the extent practicable while in compliance with state statutes, local ordinances, and mandatory reporting laws. It is the goal of the Northwestern Regional School District No. 7 and the Board of Education that the juvenile and criminal justice systems be utilized rarely to address all forms of challenging behavior.

All challenging behavior procedures and responses shall ensure due process and be enforced uniformly, fairly, consistently, and in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or disability.

For the school year beginning July 1, 2025, the Northwestern Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education adopts this "Restorative Practices Response" policy to be implemented by school employees for incidents of challenging behavior or student conflict that is nonviolent and does not constitute a crime. This policy shall not include the involvement of school resource officers or other law enforcement officials unless the behavior or conflict becomes violent or criminal.

The Board of Education (Board) supports the District's fundamental mission to provide all students the opportunity to achieve academically and socially and emotionally, ethically, civically, and intellectually at the highest levels and to become a contributing and engaged citizen in our diverse society. All students should have the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge, and competencies in a nurturing and accountable school setting. Schools play an important role in helping families and children make responsible decisions, cooperate with others, and have a successful life. Children, at times, find it difficult to manage their emotions and focus on their studies effectively. Developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills building allows students to cope with stress so they can access learning and develop into productive adults. Learning is a social activity, meaning children must be ready to learn by regulating their emotions and working constructively with others. Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps build a positive school climate by developing emotional intelligence through self-awareness, self-management, goal setting, social awareness, relationship building, collaborative skills, and responsible decision making. Students should receive effective and engaging teaching, with curriculum, instruction, and assessment designed to address the needs of diverse learners.

Restorative approaches recognize students' unique strengths, needs, and interests and present an opportunity for schools to develop a structure that utilizes practices that will create a more equitable path for all students. Utilizing restorative practices allows schools to embody more equitable approaches and meet students' short—and long-term needs.

The Board believes that all students have a right to attend schools that are safe and free from unnecessary disruption. Appropriate student behavior, reinforced by an effective system of discipline, is essential to creating and maintaining a positive school climate. This is the joint responsibility of students, staff, parents, and the community.

The Board requires District schools to implement restorative practices in response to conflict and harm. The "Restorative Practices Response" philosophy supported by the Board views misconduct as a violation against people and damaging to relationships in the school and throughout the community. The Board recognizes that schools may involve a wide range of people in the "Restorative Practices Response" process, including victims (who are often teachers, serving voluntarily), school staff, bystanders, other students, and the school community.

The four main goals of Restorative Practices Response are:

1. **Relationship Building:** creating a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities and focuses on high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community members;

2. **Accountability:** Restorative Practices Response strategies hold each student accountable for any challenging behavior;

3. **Community Safety:** Restorative Practices recognize the need to keep the school community safe through strategies ensuring that all students have a role in repairing relationships affected by challenging behavior. In safe, supportive education environments students feel a sense of belonging and allow schools to challenge policies and procedures that prevent student growth;

4. **Competency Development:** Restorative Practices Response seeks to increase the social emotional intelligence skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead students to engage in the form of challenging behavior, and build on strengths.

Definitions

Through adopting the Connecticut School Climate Policy (5131.911), the Board endorses a "Restorative Practices Response" approach to student discipline. As defined in Policy 5131.911,

Restorative Practices mean evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

"**Challenging Behavior**" means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering with, the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

"**Evidenced-Based Practices**" in education refer to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.

"**School Climate**" means the quality and character of school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community. It is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects the norms, goals, and organizational structures within the school community.

"Social and Emotional Learning" means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

"Emotional Intelligence" means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem-solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.

"School Community" means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

"School Environment" means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program,

whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support school discipline that:

1. The school district community has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification and response to all challenging behavior;
2. Maintains safe and engaging learning communities;
3. Assures consistency and coherence across all schools in the District;
4. Defines and communicates expectations for student behavior;
5. Defines and communicates expectations for staff responsibility related to school discipline;
6. Balances the needs of the student, the needs of those directly affected by "challenging behaviors," and the needs of the overall school community;
7. Assures equity across racial, ethnic, and cultural groups and all other protected classes, including, but not limited to, gender, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

General Principles

1. A positive school climate is best accomplished by preventing challenging behaviors before they occur and using effective restorative practices, in response to those challenging behaviors that may occur despite proactive measures;
2. School safety and academic success are formed and strengthened when all school staff and employees build positive relationships with students and their parents and/or guardians;
3. Effective school climate maximizes the amount of time students spend learning academically, socially, and emotionally, ethically, civically, and intellectually and minimizes the amount of time students cause disruption or are removed from their classrooms due to an act of challenging behavior;
4. School discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should be proportionate to the student's challenging behavior. Response to an act of challenging behavior that is rooted in restorative practices will provide meaningful instruction and guidance, offer students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and be more likely to result in engaging rather than punitive responses to challenging behavior. The school community should adopt policies that promote a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful relationships which promote school and community engagement;
5. Effective school climate improvement is a restorative process that engages all school community members in promoting a positive school climate. The vast majority of challenging behaviors should be addressed at the classroom level by teachers; however, behaviors that cannot be addressed at this level should receive more targeted and intensive interventions, as determined by an individualized assessment;
6. The District serves a diverse community. In order to serve all students and to prepare them to be members of an increasingly diverse community, schools and staff must build cultural competence. We must commit to eliminating institutional racism and any other discrimination that presents barriers to success. The school community should create a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities;
7. Challenging behaviors, which may be subject to disciplinary action, including any within the

school environment, but not limited to those occurring during either curricular or extracurricular activities, in classrooms, in school buildings, on school grounds, or in school vehicles, when such conduct is detrimental to the school environment and to the welfare or safety of other students or school personnel.

General Policy Guidelines

The District's system of school climate improvement is built on the incorporation of restorative practices, which should include:

Evidence and research-based system-level restorative practices that focus on:

1) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, 2) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and
3) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

Restorative practices should be guided by the Connecticut School Climate Standards:

1. The school district community has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behaviors.

2. The school district community adopts policies that promote: a) a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and b) a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally reengaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.

3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to: a) promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students. b) enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities. c) address barriers to teaching and learning; and d) develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.

4. The school community creates a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities,

5. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

    a. Practicing early identification and assessment of struggling students;
    b. Using a problem-solving/collaborative process to provide interventions matched to student needs;
    c. Ensuring timely progress monitoring and feedback; and
    d. Delivering scientific research-based interventions.

The District shall post this policy on the District website and in each school. A copy of this policy and accompanying procedures shall be readily available in each school's administration office.

Copies of this policy, any accompanying procedures/regulations, and school rules will be made available, upon request, to each student and parent/guardian and, upon request, promptly translated into a language that the parent/guardian can understand.

Applying the goals related to Restorative Practices Response, this policy's definitions, purpose, principles and guidelines, the Superintendent, or his/her/their designee shall develop such procedures and provide for any training necessary as may be needed to effectively implement this policy.

(cf. 1110.1 – Parent Involvement)
(cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
(cf. 5114 – Suspension/Expulsion; Student Due Process)
(cf. 5131 – Conduct)

(cf. 5131.1 – Bus Conduct)
(cf. 5131.6 – Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco)
(cf. 5131.7 – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments)
(cf. 5131.8 – Out of School Grounds Misconduct)
(cf. 5131.9 – Gang Activity or Association)
(cf. 5131.911 – Connecticut School Climate Policy)
(cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
(cf. 5131.92 – Corporal Punishment)
(cf. 5141.4 – Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect)
(cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
(cf. 5144.3 – Discipline of Students with Disabilities)
(cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
(cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
(cf. 5145.52 – Harassment)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

4-177 through 4-180. Contested Cases. Notice. Record, as amended.

10-233a through 10-233f Suspension, removal and expulsion of students, as periodically amended.

2la-240(9) Definitions.

53a-3 Definitions.

GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, Pub. L. 103-227.

18 U.S.C. 921 Definitions

Title III - Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act Sec. 314

Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1968, as amended by the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994

PL 105-17 The Individuals with Disabilities Act, Amendments of 1997

P.L. 108-446 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

State v. Hardy, 896 A.2d 755, 278 Conn 113 (2006)

Public Act 23-167, Section 74, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

Policy adopted:

Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response

The following procedures are developed for implementing Board Policy #5144.12. They are designed to be consistent with the general purpose and principles outlined in the aforementioned policy and with federal and state statutes and regulations.

The District and staff are committed to establishing positive learning environments that ensure that all students have access to a quality education. The District recognizes that a key aspect of maintaining a healthy and safe environment is establishing and maintaining positive and constructive behavior in our schools. This goal can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of our school personnel, students, parents, guardians, and our community.

School Discipline Administration

1. Staff training will be provided as needed to ensure that the Restorative Practices in each school are effective and that relevant policies and procedures are equitably applied. Such training will include, but not limited to, strategies and approaches related to Restorative Practices and its theoretical framework.
2. School district staff responsible for implementing this policy shall do so without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity or expression, age or disability.
3. Challenging behavior related to students receiving special education and tiered intervention supports shall be in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), and behavior intervention plan, 504 Plan, and Board policy.
4. The District believes that developing strong relationships with families is the first step in establishing safe and healthy schools. School staff members are encouraged to contact parents early in the school year to proactively establish positive school-home communication and throughout the school year to share student successes and challenges, and develop plans to help students have access to a quality education.
5. The District is committed to eliminating the disparity in school discipline with respect to its underserved populations by reducing the number of referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. The staff will engage in restorative practices that enhance school climate and develop a system for addressing challenging behavior that promotes equity. Staff members are specifically charged with monitoring the impact of their actions on students from racial and ethnic groups or other protected classes that have historically been over-represented among those students who are suspended, expelled or referred to law enforcement. The District will collect discipline data examining and aggregating referrals and disciplinary responses.

School-Level Rules

In developing school-level rules of behavior, the school shall solicit the views and feedback of at least one representative selected by each of the following groups:

1. Parents/guardians
2. Teachers
3. School administrators
4. For middle, junior high and high schools, students enrolled in the school

The "rules" shall be consistent with law, Board of Education (Board) policy, and District administrative regulations. The development of the rules shall be informed by school-level challenging behavior data as described in policy #5144.12.

Through annual climate surveys, the school shall also solicit participants' views on whether school-level and District-level standards of behavior are being equitably and fairly applied. The confidentiality of student records shall be maintained at all times.

Interventions

General: Effective school responses related to challenging behavior shall promote interventions that refrain from interrupting a student's education to the extent possible. Schools should minimize the use of suspensions, recommendations for expulsion, and referrals to law enforcement to the extent practicable while remaining consistent with federal and state statutes, regulations, and Board policies.

Reasonable Responses to Challenging Behavior Consequences: Responses should be reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, and match the severity of the student's misbehavior, and through restorative practice consider the impact on the victim and/or community. Restorative practices that include meaningful instruction and guidance offer students an opportunity to learn from their
mistakes and contribute back to the school community, and are more likely to result in having the student re-engage in learning.

Relevant Considerations for Determining Restorative Practices

1. Age, health and special education status of the student.
2. Appropriateness of student's academic placement.
3. Student's prior conduct and record of challenging behavior.
4. Student's attitude.
5. Student's willingness to repair the harm.
6. Seriousness of the offense and the degree of harm caused.
7. Impact of the incident on the overall school community.
8. The availability of prevention programs designed to address challenging behavior should also be considered before determining a restorative practices response.

Interventions/Alternative Means of Correction: When challenging behavior occurs, schools shall investigate the circumstances and gather facts that will help determine appropriate interventions and a restorative response for that student, with emphasis on correcting student misbehavior through school-based resources. Responses to challenging behavior should provide students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and re-engage the student in learning. All interventions should balance the needs of the student, the needs of those directly affected by the behavior, and the needs of the overall school community.

Each school is responsible for incorporating a restorative response framework into its planning to reduce referrals and suspensions through proactive intervention, positive behavioral support, restorative practices, and other non-punitive approaches to challenging behavior focused on maximizing student achievement, reducing such behaviors and avoiding loss of instructional time through the use of tiered interventions. That intervention framework shall integrate a Restorative Practices framework.

Referral of students from the classroom environment for challenging behaviors should be avoided. The District expects alternatives to suspension and restorative practices to be utilized before referring a student out of the classroom. The District expects that alternatives will be undertaken within the classroom except where suspension for specific offenses is required by statute and Board policy or where it can be documented that the challenging behavior imposes a clear danger to others.

There are three types of intervention strategies to be considered: Administrative, Restorative, and Skill-based/Therapeutic.

1. **Administrative Strategies** are statutorily or policy-required interventions that respond "to" the offender. These include removal from the classroom, detention, suspension, and expulsion.

2. **Restorative Strategies** coordinate with Connecticut's School Climate Policy as they are problem-solving interventions responding "with" the offender. They are driven by an opportunity to restore the harm caused as much as possible and focus on the harm caused and how it will be repaired. A successful restorative practice response strategy may utilize interventions with allied agencies and professionals. An assessment of the incident/conduct will be completed, and the school or district will determine whether a face-to-face meeting with all parties is appropriate. Examples may include:

    a. Family group conferencing
    b. Victim-offender mediation
    c. Classroom mediation circles
    d. Reparation of harm

3. **Therapeutic/Resource Strategies** are responses "by" the offender and require intrinsic motivational behavior change. Such interventions include:

    a. Mental health counseling
    b. Anger management classes
    c. Informal mentoring and behavior coaching

Teachers and administrators should intentionally utilize various types of strategies, or multiple strategies simultaneously, to address and correct challenging behavior, especially for multiple offenses.

Restorative Justice in Northwestern Regional School District No. 7

The Board considers Restorative Practices Response as a set of principles and practices used to build community, respond to harm/conflict, and provide individual circles of support for students in District schools. By building, maintaining, and restoring relationships between members of the entire school community, the District strives to create an environment where all students can thrive. The Restorative Justice approach to school discipline is to be implemented through a 3-tier, school-wide model.

Tier 1: Community Building (Prevention/Relate)

The goal is to build a caring, intentional, and equitable community with conditions conducive to learning.

Tier 2: Restorative Processes (Intervention/Repair)

Tier 2 is characterized by the use of non-punitive responses to harm/conflict such as harm circles, mediation, or family group conferencing to respond to disciplinary issues in a restorative manner. This process addresses the root causes of the harm, supports accountability for the offender, and promotes healing for the victim(s), the offender, and the school community.

Tier 3: Supported Re-entry (Individualized/Re-Integrate)

Tier 3 is characterized by individualized and personalized support and successful re-entry of youth following suspension, truancy, expulsion or incarceration. The goal is to welcome youth to the school community in a manner that provides wrap-around support and promotes student accountability and achievement.

Classroom-based Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behaviors

Classroom-based strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. Explicit re-teaching of behavioral expectations;
2. Separating students;
3. Phone call to parent;
4. Keeping students after class;
5. Restorative conference with student(s) or class;
6. Creation of a positive behavior contract;

7. Conference with student;
8. Conference with parent and the student.

School-based Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behaviors

Students who exhibit a pattern of challenging behaviors should be provided more intensive support through a system of tiered interventions. Parents should be notified if there is an escalating pattern of challenging behavior that could lead to classroom or school removal. Appropriate school-based strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. A conference between school staff and the student and his/her parents/guardians.

2. Referral to a school counselor or other school support service personnel for case management and counseling.

3. Referral for drug or alcohol counseling.

4. Convening of a Student Study Team (SST) or other intervention-related team to assess the behavior and develop and implement an individual plan to address the behavior in partnership with the student and his/her parents/guardians.

5. When applicable, referral for a comprehensive psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment or Applied Behavior Analysis, including for purposes of creating a behavior plan, an individualized education program, or a Section 504 plan.

6. Enrollment in a program for building anger management skills.

7. Continue to encourage participation in a restorative justice program.

8. A positive behavior support approach with tiered interventions that occur during the school day on campus.

Detention After School

Students may be kept after school for disciplinary reasons (up to one hour) after the school day has ended.

If a student will miss his/her school bus because he/she is kept after school or is not transported by school bus, the principal or designee shall notify parents/guardians of the detention at least one day in advance so that alternative transportation arrangements may be made. The student shall not be detained unless the principal or designee notifies the parent/guardian.

Students shall remain under the supervision of a certified employee during the period of detention.

Community Service

For consideration with a restorative practices response strategy, the Board, Superintendent, Principal, or Principal's designee may, at his/her discretion, allow for a student to perform community service during non-school hours on school grounds or, with the written permission of the student's parent/guardian, off school grounds. Such service may include but is not limited to, community or school outdoor beautification, campus betterment, and teacher, peer, or youth assistance programs.

Referrals

The Board supports the adoption of the SRBI framework to facilitate a systems approach to positive, prosocial behavior management. The District expects teachers to attempt SRBI-tiered interventions prior to making a referral out of the classroom whenever possible.

When a referral out of the classroom is made, the principal or his/her designee must ensure that staff making the referral complete the following:

1. Teacher completed a written referral notification/form;
2. Principal or his/her designee reviewed the referral form and, if warranted, assigned appropriate

consequences;

3. The Principal or his/her designee or teacher contacted the student's parents/guardians and notified them of any consequences;
4. The Principal or his/her designee investigated the reasons for the student's conduct; 5. The Principal or his/her designee recorded the classroom interventions and referrals in the District's database.

Notice to Parents/Guardians and Students

At the beginning of the school year, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify parents/guardians about the availability of district rules and procedures related to student behaviors and school climate.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall also provide written notice of behavior rules to transfer students at the time of their enrollment in the District.

Parent programs that relate to how the school integrates Restorative Practices Response in the student discipline/behavior management system will be provided.

Annual Review/Discipline Committees

Both individual schools and the district will evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the school behavior plan using school disciplinary data disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender of the student. This will allow schools and the district to identify areas of need; target areas of concern; access professional development, supports, and services; and revise school procedures as needed.

In consideration with the Connecticut Positive School Climate Policy, schools will review student discipline data.

The review will include the following:

1. Intervention and prevention strategies.
2. The number of referrals, in school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, grade, disability, and gender of the students, where available.
3. Differences in referrals among staff members.
4. The extent to which the policy, including but not limited to disciplinary action, is consistently applied to all students.
5. Review of Restorative Practices and their impact on student discipline and climate.

Based on the review, schools will make changes consistent with the intent of this and other related policies.

Schools are encouraged to establish a discipline committee including school personnel, parents and students to develop, monitor, and evaluate school discipline policy and school climate. The use of school discipline data is recommended in this process.

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