LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

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

Policy and Communications Committee Meeting
March 11, 2025

Committee Members Present: 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 that the next edition of the *Focus on Education* newsletter should be mailed to the community this week. She is currently working on the next issue, which is the budget issue. In that edition, she addresses the following subjects in a question and answer format: enrollment and how it fluctuates at the different grade levels; debt service impact to the budget; and an update on the building project.

Mrs. Compagno reported on the status of a background banner to use for photo-ops for the Board of Ed meetings when students or staff are being recognized. There was discussion on the best location to place the banner for ease of taking photos during a meeting and to also get the best lighting.

Mrs. Compagno reported on the hiring of a photographer for professional photos for publications and the district website.

Mr. Neviaser discussed the wide variety of communications sent to parents and the new webpage where information can be found that was recently created on the district website: https://www.region18.org/district-information/communications. There was consensus that their goal of improvement in this area has been met but will be ongoing.

Policy Update
Title IX Policy Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment
Background on this policy: *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 presented these sample policies (for personnel and students) supplied by legal counsel and the committee reviewed. These will go for full Board approval at the April 2, 2025 Board meeting.

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 also compared 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. As well, he believes that the institutional neutrality policy is on a broader scale and more of a district-wide policy.

The committee discussed the policy in depth and although some of the same wording appears in the *Controversial Issues* policy, it was ultimately decided to keep language intact in the *Institutional Neutrality* policy. This policy will also be added to the April 2, 2025 Board meeting agenda.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.