

The New London Board of Education Policy Committee meeting was held on April 8, 2025 via Zoom teleconferencing.

1. Call to Order

Nathan Caron, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present for the Committee: Nathan Caron – Committee Chair
Scott Garbini – Committee Member (*Arrived at 6:06 p.m.*)
Elaine Maynard-Adams – Committee Member
Betsy Perkins – Community Representative

Absent for the Committee: Bianca Alexis-Sylvain – Committee Member
Colleen Delaporta-Wells – NLEA Representative

Present for the Administration: Kristea A. Francolino – Manager of Executive Support Services
Cynthia Ritchie – Superintendent of Schools

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Ms. Perkins, to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2025 Policy Committee Meeting.

Motion carried, 3-0

Mr. Garbini entered the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

4. Remove from the Table: Continued Discussion and Possible Approval of Policy 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression

Motion by Mr. Caron, seconded by Ms. Maynard-Adams, to remove from the table: continued discussion and possible approval of Policy 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression.

Motion carried, 4-0

Ms. Francolino shared that this policy had been put on the table until such time that CAGE could provide feedback on some of the language in the policy. She shared with the committee, the recommended language that was sent. Additionally, she noted that CAGE agreed that the language seemed confusing, and that their legal and policy team would continue to revise the policy. Should any additional updates come, Ms. Francolino would share them with the

committee. The recommendation was to, in the Printed Materials section of the policy, replace: “The school district shall assume no responsibility for the contents of any written material produced, posted, circulated or otherwise distributed, or of student conduct, taken in accordance with this policy, insofar as such matter or conduct may relate to any interests other than those of an orderly and efficient educational process and proper school environments” with “The school district assumes no responsibility for the contents of any written material produced, posted, circulated or otherwise distributed, or of student conduct in accordance with this policy. Through this policy, the district shall make every attempt to balance the rights to free expression with the interests of ensuring an orderly and efficient educational process and proper school environment”.

Motion by Mr. Caron, seconded by Mr. Garbini, to amend the policy with the language as recommended by CABA.

Motion carried, 4-0

Motion by Mr. Caron, seconded by Ms. Maynard-Adams, to approve Policy 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression as amended.

Motion carried, 4-0

5. Continued Discussion and Possible Approval of Policy 5131.81 – Use of Private Technology Devices by Students

Mr. Caron reviewed with the committee that there has been multiple meetings of discussion regarding this policy. Ms. Maynard-Adams expressed that she would be supportive of banning all phones in the classroom, but would at the very least want them away from students during instruction. Dr. Ritchie also added that she would agree with having no phones in elementary classrooms. There was discussion with multiple members of the committee expressing their desire to ensure that students who may require their devices per an IEP, 504, or health care plan may still have access to them. It was also suggested that different requirements be broken out between the elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. Committee members also expressed wanting to ensure that ear buds, headphones, and AI glasses were included in this policy. It was also noted that there should be language about the procedure should there be a need to have a cell phone searched as well, inclusive of parent and police notification and involvement.

Mr. Caron volunteered to take the committee’s recommendations and create a red-lined draft for the next committee meeting. The charge of the committee at the next meeting would be to finalize proposed revisions to the policy and recommend such version to the full Board for approval, to be communicated to families prior to the next school year.

6. Committee Member Comments

Mr. Garbini thanked Mr. Caron for having great meetings, and for the work being done to update policies.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Garbini, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 4-0

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristea A. Francolino
Manager of Executive Support Services