

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Sue Cohen (co-chair), Tom Hurley (co-chair), Diane Crocco, Sheila McCreven, and Christopher Browe.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Rita Gedansky.

Staff members present: Mr. Charles Dumais.

Also present: Ruth Natzel

A meeting of the Policy Committee of the Amity Regional Board of Education (BOE) was held on Thursday, October 30, 2014 at 5:30 pm in the Superintendent's conference room at the District Offices.

1. Call to Order: Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

2. Review of recent required policy updates

Mr. Dumais explained the contents of the packet of information containing the current bullying/school safety policy that is in place, with edits, and a draft copy of the final document. Current policies and their revision dates have been checked by Karen Wade at Mr. Dumais' request to see if updates are required. There are at least 12 policies that need to be updated; Mr. Dumais has gone back to November 2012. He will go back further after the work is completed on these. We need a process in place to update our policies. Priority is to establish a plan to update all the policies.

1. Engage the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) in a review to bring us to baseline
2. Committing to going through the 12 required policies first and then moving on from there.

Ms. McCreven asked about policy regarding graduation and Connecticut Academic Performance Testing (CAPT), i.e., because class of 2016 did not take CAPT they cannot graduate according to the current policy. Does the policy need to be suspended or changed so they can graduate? There are situations that the Superintendent can use his discretion to address this and other concerns. This graduation requirement has been brought up and will be addressed.

There was discussion of the electronic version of the policies and of what the plan to update the policies should be from this point forward; electronic and paper versions need to agree.

There was discussion of the current absentee policy. Amity would like a more stringent requirement than the State has, which allows 10 unexcused absences and then requires a doctor's note. There was discussion of student handbooks versus policies with handbooks having grown so large. There was some discussion of the current dress codes. The Committee stated that the absentee policy needs to be clearer, and handbooks need to be in agreement with the policies.

The Committee decided to proceed with the 12 policy revisions and the bullying policy revisions as they have been presented here.

The Committee decided that the update for next Board meeting will be:

1. Review bullying and teen dating violence
2. Most recent CABE update June 30, 2014 update and April 18, 2014
3. New CABE update November 2014 update
4. Work backwards chronologically through the 12 revisions presented.
5. Work through 2 policies at a time until all 12 are finished.

The next Policy Committee meetings will be at 5:15 pm on November 13, 2014 and December 18, 2014.

Mr. Hurley is concerned about a concussion policy update – is this needed or is it missing? Mr. Hurley would also like the capability of presenting on a screen in future meetings, old and new policies side by side.

Mr. Browe commented that the password for CABE site needed for committee members and Mr. Dumais provided that.

Ms. McCreven stated that CABE will provide a service to put all your documents on line for a fee. Woodbridge is currently doing this and it could be beneficial. It needs to be a searchable document and we need to go truly digital with all policy documents.

Mr. Hurley asked if the Committee would like to schedule further meetings going forward now, perhaps on Thursdays? Or, use a call-in option GoToMeeting?

Ms. Cohen commented that everyone on the Committee doing their reading homework is important.

There was discussion about various points of bullying policy. There was much discussion about dating violence, emotional abuse. The policy is framed to address what is going on with students in the district. A request was made for Ms. Moses editor to incorporate legislation into the policy. The committee noted that references are missing. Mr. Dumais read aloud Public Act 14-234 section 3, subsection 3, the definition of teen dating violence in the policy draft is taken verbatim from the legislature. After much discussion and reading, the Committee finds that updated “blue” bullying policy done by Marcia Moses was taken from the CABE policy rather than the Amity updated policy.

Mr. Dumais can incorporate current policy and bring it to committee for presentation so that hard work is done ahead of the committee meetings.

There were questions and debate regarding Amity making its own policies versus just taking the State-generated policies as our own. There was extended discussion regarding bullying/teen violence policy and sexual harassment. The District is required to have a separate sexual harassment policy and the policies do overlap. A definition of hazing seems to be lacking.

Policy states that the Safe School Climate Plan must be published on the school website and in the student handbook. Policy also states that the Safe School Climate committee will make changes to the policy – who is the committee?

Plan and preparation for next Committee meeting will be:

Review bullying and teen dating violence.

Most recent CABE update June 30, 2014 (including administration of medications) update and April 18, 2014.

The question was asked about the Superintendent being able to override anything that might come up that is not covered by policy, i.e. graduation requirements.

Ms. Cohen gave Mr. Dumais some policy numbers to look at that are known to need updating.

3. **Adjournment**

Ms. Cohen moved to adjourn, 2nd by Ms. Crocco at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth E. Natzel, Recording Clerk