

**CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
HELD ON NOVEMBER 12, 2024 IN THE HUMISTON BOARD ROOM**

Committee Members Present: Mark Ecke, Chair; Adam Grippo
Committee Members Absent: Dr. Anne Harrigan
Other Board Members Present: Samantha Rosenberg, BOE Chair
Administrators Present: Dr. Jeffrey F. Solan, Superintendent of Schools

A video of this meeting is available on the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at
www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Ecke called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. Audience.

Paul Orłowski. 1708 Byam Road. Mr. Orłowski attended the meeting to re-share his suggestions regarding revising language and definitions in the draft Equity and Diversity policy and Non-discrimination policy. He suggested cleaning up language such as conscious and unconscious bias. Regarding Electronic Devices, he said he does not own a cell phone but his teenage daughter does. He said parents have the choice to either have their children ostracized for not having a device or try to mitigate the damage. He agrees with banning cell phones in school, so students concentrate on what they are supposed to. Dr. Solan explained his is still awaiting clarification from our attorneys regarding the language for the DEI policy. He also explained the book clubs he has had regarding the Anxious Generation that talk about the damaging effects of social media to children. He thanked Mr. Orłowski for his insight.

3. Review Policies for a Possible First Reading:

0521 Nondiscrimination Policy & Notice

Dr. Solan said this policy is also one he would like to discuss with our attorney. The previous policy delineated a variety of forms of discrimination and this policy drafted outlines Title IX exclusively. The regulation, which usually follows the policy, is exclusively 507, Title 7. Dr. Solan said he would like a review with our attorneys before moving it forward for a first reading.

4112.5/4212.5 Security Check/Fingerprinting/Criminal Justice

The Committee continued their review of this revised policy. Dr. Solan noted that at the last meeting there were questions regarding the word “nurses” being stricken from the policy. We checked with CABE, and they said it was stricken because there was no reason to single out nurses. All individuals hired for a position with a board of education must submit to state and national criminal history records checks within thirty days from when they begin employment. In addition, there had been questions about information in the Appendix. That information was from the old regulation and is stricken from this new version.

4118.51 Rights, Responsibilities, Duties – Social Networking

Dr. Solan said at their last meeting they discussed reviewing our social media policy. He shared some suggested revisions to the language in our existing policy. The shared revisions include, “Employees may not use their school district title **or affiliation ...**”, “... may not **access** social media or update their status on any social networking sites during normal working hours . . .” “*shall not post or publish any information the Superintendent in his/her reasonable discretion would deem to be inappropriate*”. Dr. Solan said there are a lot of protections for Freedom of Speech. Committee members asked about using “shall” versus “must” in terms of enforceability. Dr. Solan said he will check with our attorneys.

5131.81 Electronic Devices

Dr. Solan said that we would have one of our technology experts attend the next Policy Committee meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the use of personal devices in Cheshire Public Schools. Dr. Solan shared information from the Connecticut Superintendent’s group regarding a survey one district did asking staff about prohibiting student cell phones in grades 6-12. He would like to survey students in grades 6-12 and possibly all parents for feedback. Dr. Solan said he will try to have a draft survey to the Committee by December 2. The Committee will continue their review of this policy at the next Policy Committee meeting before moving it to the full Board.

6148 FAFSA Completion Program

Dr. Solan noted this replacement policy is recommended by CAFE. The policy mandates that “*Beginning with classes graduating in 2025-2027, graduating students must have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), completed and submitted to a public institution of higher education an application for institutional financial aid for students without legal immigration status, or completed a waiver, on a form prescribed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) signed by the student’s parent/legal guardian or by the student if 18 years of age or older.*”

6172 Alternative Education Program

Dr. Solan said this policy and regulation are to ensure that students who are in an alternative program have access to the same educational opportunities as the standard high school. It also adds language regarding a credit recovery program. While we do not have a program through Humiston, we do through an agreement with Wallingford.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Mr. Ecke.

MOVED that the Policy Committee bring forward Policies #4112.5/4212.5 Security Check/Fingerprinting/Criminal Justice; #4118.51 Social Networking; #6148 FAFSA Completion Process and #6172 Alternative Education Program, to the full Board for a first reading.

VOTE: The Motion passed 2-0.

4. **Review Policies for a Second Reading:**

4000.1/4200.1/5145.44 Sexual Harassment/Title IX & Regulation

The Committee continued their review of this policy. This is a blanket policy that will apply to certified and non-certified personnel and students and will replace all three policies. This is a completely revised policy and regulation due to the US Department of Education's 2024 amendments to its Title IX Rule.

5114 Suspension & Expulsion Due Process

Dr. Solan shared this revised policy and regulation and noted the statutory changes. CABE said they combined two other policies - #5144 and #5131 for easier reference. The policy contains language that reduces the maximum number of consecutive days for in-school suspensions from preschool to grade two and shortens the maximum out-of-school suspension for these grades from ten to five days. His suggestion is to replace our current policy with CABE's revised policy. Dr. Solan noted the first two pages of the policy are more value-based than legislative based. They began their review of the policy and regulation. Under "Clear Expectations and Communication."

5. **Review Policies for a Third Reading:**

0523 Equity and Diversity Policy.

Dr. Solan said he has not had a conversation with our attorney to review some of the Committee's questions. The Committee will continue their review of this policy at the next Policy Committee meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Mr. Ecke.

MOVED that the Policy Committee bring forward Policies #4000.1/4200.1/5145.44 Sexual Harassment/Title IX; and 5114 Suspension & Expulsion Due Process to the full Board for a second reading.

VOTE: The Motion passed 2-0.

6. **Adjournment.**

On a Motion by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Ecke, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Ecke, Policy Committee Chair

Attest: _____
Carol Jesensky, Board Clerk

Filed with the Cheshire Town Clerk's Office on 11/22/2024.