

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Members present: Kathy Gorsky, chair; Tom Frattarolli, Steve Clark, Bob Pagoni (via FaceTime)

Administrators present: Dr. Tym McDowell, Dr. Walt Willett, Dominique Fox

The meeting began at 1:10.

The committee began with a discussion of the personal technology policy, policy 6012. There were two items of concern:

1. The student handbook was not in line with the Bring Your Own Device policy because it specified that personal cellphones must be left in student lockers.
2. Students had expressed that they would like to be able to text or make calls during free time i.e. while in the halls between classes and at lunch.

Ms. Fox noted that the student handbook will be changed for next year; the language that requires students to keep cellphones in their lockers will be stricken. She also noted that students are aware that they may use their cellphones for instructional purposes, when directed to do so by a teacher. She agreed to reiterate this with students. She was very wary of allowing students to use cellphones for personal reasons during the school day. She noted that students have been known to text other students with test answers, etc. In addition, keeping language in the policy that states that personal technology may only be used for "instructional purposes" allows administration the opportunity to review a student's cellphone use when it is suspected that a student is using it in an inappropriate manner (i.e. bullying, sexting). Ms. Fox also noted that the NEASC accreditation committee expressed that they appreciated seeing students interacting and talking face to face, which they do not see at schools that allow personal use of phones during school hours. She said that students have ample opportunity to contact parents if necessary and that teachers are willing to allow phone calls to be made to parents when students have asked for permission. She agreed to reiterate this point with students as well. The committee agreed to leave the policy as it stands.

Next the committee looked at Policy 9130 regarding the scheduling of Board meetings. The committee voted to add language in the policy that would require that the policy committee review the meeting schedule before it is submitted to the Board for review. The new language will be submitted to the Board for a first reading at the next meeting on December 10th.

The committee next discussed the addition of proposed Policy 1360 regarding the school calendar. The district has no current policy regarding this topic. The new policy would require that the policy committee review the proposed school calendar before it is then submitted to the Board for two readings. The new policy will be submitted to the Board for a first reading on December 10th.

Finally, the committee reviewed Policy 5081, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy as well as its corresponding regulation, the Safe School Climate Plan. Ms. Gorsky pointed out that Margot Martello had spoken to the committee last spring and had expressed the viewpoint that allowing anonymous reporting of bullying is dangerous as it may lead to abuse of the system. However, the new policy is required by state law. It includes language that requires a system for allowing anonymous reporting of bullying and includes “teen dating violence” in the description of bullying. The committee voted to approve the new policy.

The meeting adjourned at 2:46 PM.

The next policy committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 17th at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gorsky