

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Policy Committee met in Special Session on Monday, December 9, 2019 at 4:00 PM at Central Office, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore (arrived late), Mr. Roraback (arrived late) and Mr. Yamartino.

Committee members absent: Mrs. Caramanello and Dr. Taylor

Other Board members present: Mrs. Petrella

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Hicks called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Booth, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes - November 25, 2019

Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Booth, to approve the minutes of November 25, 2019, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of November 25, 2019, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.

Review of correspondence from legal counsel on Food Allergies, Glycogen Storage and/or Diabetes policy

Dr. Veronesi explained that the head nurse had concerns about food allergies, glycogen and diabetes all being together in one policy. She asked Shipman and Goodwin to look at it and they said it was based on statute and can remain as is. They did, however, state that the district could decide to separate each of these issues into individual policies. The attorneys felt that leaving it as is would be the least complicated way to comply with the statutory requirement. Everyone generally agreed to go with the attorneys' advice.

Review of the following policies:**A. Section 504/ADA (Students)**

The committee reviewed the addition of some details on how parents can file a complaint and the description of the identified impairment. The policy reviews the procedures that are used if there is any allegation about unfair treatment or discrimination based on the disability. There was discussion about who would run an investigation if the Superintendent is involved. Mr. Yamartino would like to see clarification on that, but Mr. Hicks was fine with it the way it is and would not want to limit flexibility. Dr. Veronesi reviewed that there are specific reporting mechanisms and laws to follow in these cases.

Dr. Veronesi noted that this past year was the first time she had a request to meet with parents over the summer about concerns they had about their children, though no complaints were filed. If a parent comes to the superintendent with a complaint, she would initiate the steps outlined in the policy and an investigation.

Mrs. Petrella asked if everyone felt that it would be worthwhile to read through every policy, rather than just looking at changes. Mr. Hicks felt that there wasn't a lot of wiggle room in any of the policies anyway.

B. Sex Discrimination Harassment Policy (Personnel)

This policy has additions about requirements for posting, reporting and training. Dr. Veronesi explained that training is provided online for sexual harassment, DCF reporting requirements and blood-borne pathogens. They also do an in-person review of the bullying policies and regulations.

Mrs. Booth asked how many of the staff are CPR-certified and Dr. Veronesi stated that she wasn't sure exactly how many. Every building has at least one AED.

C. Smoking

Changes here further define board property and consolidate definition of vaping devices.

D. Student Discipline

There are expanded definitions included of controlled substances and talks about all parts of the growth, distribution and storage of controlled substances. Mr. Yamartino mentioned that the smoking policy does not include discipline and asked how that would be handled. Dr. Veronesi said that the school determines the discipline. There was discussion about how policies need to be publicized. Mr. Yamartino asked how the superintendent's latitude can be viewed with discipline and Dr. Veronesi explained that they look at a variety of issues with each case and that it cannot be arbitrary. She added that it's important to keep discipline consistent and confidential.

E. Student Expulsion Hearing Notice

Dr. Veronesi asked Mr. Hicks if the board at ACES has an impartial hearing panel or if board members conduct the hearings and he stated that it was board members, but they have very few expulsions because most of them are connected to a manifestation hearing.

Mr. Yamartino asked what determines that three or more board members participate in the hearing, but Dr. Veronesi wasn't sure what determined that. She also showed some suggested modifications to the forms that the district uses.

Mr. Moore asked if there are any policies on what happens with the student after expulsion, i.e. where they go and how it gets paid. Dr. Veronesi explained that part of that is the individualized learning plan and the district has always offered a very comprehensive plan, including homebound tutoring and community service. Mr. Hicks added that if the district recommends any therapy, the district must also pay for that. Dr. Veronesi noted that some districts may not expel even when they should due to the cost and personnel involved.

F. Transportation

This policy includes language about what a walking route is and the definition of a bus stop. There was discussion about if there are any requirements for a sidewalk as well as where school property actually starts.

G. Administration of Medication

Language was added that a student may possess and self-administer medications, including but not limited to medications administered with a cartridge injector, to protect the student against serious harm of death. Parent or guardian must provide written authorization and a medical professional must provide a written order. Mr. Moore asked if that would include insulin injections and Dr. Veronesi felt that it would. Mrs. Booth asked if there was an age restriction and Dr. Veronesi said she will check on that. Mr. Yamartino thought that the nurse at the school would also have to approve.

Mrs. Petrella asked if there was a policy about students having over-the-counter medications and it was generally agreed that they may not carry it and the nurse would have to have parental permission to administer it. Mr. Hicks asked if teachers who give EpiPens are trained every year and Dr. Veronesi stated that the nurse does that.

Dr. Veronesi mentioned that the high school nurse has asked about having a policy to make Narcan available for use by the nurse. Mr. Moore thought the State Police also have that authority. Mr. Yamartino stated that Middlefield had a presentation on Narcan in October and free samples were given to the participants by the Southington Health District. He thought that they may provide training and materials to the school district as well. Mr. Moore felt it would be a good idea in the high school, as does Dr. Veronesi. Mr. Yamartino asked if bus drivers should be trained to administer Narcan as well. Dr. Veronesi will ask the attorneys about adding Narcan to the policy. Mrs. Booth felt that it should also be at Strong School and maybe even other schools. Mr. Yamartino added that they might want it at all the schools to protect parents, staff and visitors.

H. Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

Dr. Veronesi noted that language was added about possessing and self-administering medication.

I. Guidelines for IEEs

Dr. Veronesi explained that an IEE is an independent educational evaluation that is done if a parent disagrees with the evaluation that the school district completed and it will be done at a cost to the school district. There was some discussion about various types of testing and how it was done in the past. Dr. Veronesi also explained that there is a special education teacher in the district now who is specially trained in dyslexia and is training others.

J. Health Assessment Screenings

Language about the board being able to choose oral health assessments has been added to this policy.

K. IDEA/Accessing Public Benefits/Insurance

This policy has to do with students in special education and IDEA notification about Medicaid. The district has a process to give information to everyone about Medicaid. There are currently about 35 students in special education who actually qualify for Medicaid based on their parents' income.

L. Immunizations

There were a few edits to this policy, basically substituting words. Mr. Yamartino mentioned that John Lyman School students did not meet the state's cut-off for percentage of students with immunizations. He explained that the Southington Health District could provide education to parents, if the district wanted to engage them. Other committee members felt that if parents don't want to vaccinate their children, they aren't going to change their minds. Mrs. Booth stated that there are pediatricians now who won't accept patients if they are not going to be vaccinated.

M. Individualized Learning Plans

Dr. Veronesi explained that they went over this as part of the student discipline policy. This includes students who are expelled and who are in special education.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Missy Booth, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Debi Waz
Alwaz First