

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Policy Committee met in Regular Session on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 6:00 PM remotely.

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

Committee members absent: Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino

Board members present: Dr. Friedrich

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Hicks called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

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

### **Approval of Minutes - March 17, 2021**

*Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the minutes of March 17, 2021, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of March 17, 2021, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Remote meetings update**

Dr. Schuch summarized that, during the pandemic, under the advice of the attorneys and guidance from the state, there had been a policy enacted by the Board of Education that permitted for remote board meetings and committee meetings. Even though the executive orders that allowed that are expiring, there seems to be a gray area that may allow the meetings to continue remotely under that temporary policy through the end of the current school year. The attorneys do not believe that would extend beyond the school year. They also felt that committee meetings should be handled just as full board meetings.

Since receiving that advice, Governor Lamont has announced that all business restrictions will be lifted as of May 19<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Schuch explained that they had planned to have the May and June meetings in person with accommodations for those who did not want to meet in person, however they may be able to stay completely remote. Dr. Schuch does have a concern about the optics of the district asking staff and

students to be in school since September when the board has not met in person. He does feel that those optics will be troubling once the business restrictions are lifted.

Dr. Schuch discussed this with the group of superintendents and some are meeting in person while others are not. Most are still trying to decide when to go back to in-person meetings.

Mr. Moore agreed with Dr. Schuch's summary and felt that the policy can remain in place for now. The attorney did not give any guidance on how to fix the policy. Zoom may be better than calling in for a meeting, but that may be difficult with the technology at the school. Mr. Moore felt that they should have the May 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting via Zoom and the following one would be the first in-person meeting.

Mr. Hicks spoke with a lot of board members who are part of ACES and they are all doing different things. Some meet remotely, some meet hybrid with both remote and in-person and others meet in-person. He noted that Meriden has never been remote and have met in person all along. He felt that they could continue to meet as they are through the end of the year.

Mr. Roraback noted that they are blessed to have people who have the time to serve on this board and worries that, in the coming decade, people will not step up to do that. He does not believe public access is restricted when they meet remotely. He felt that the future will be committee meetings remotely and full board meetings in-person. Dr. Schuch agreed with Mr. Roraback, however the state requires in-person meetings for committees as well.

Mr. Moore stated that the board's current policy would not allow meetings via Zoom, so they will have to look at that policy and have the attorneys review it. Dr. Schuch asked for clarification on when the board will begin meeting in person and Mr. Moore felt that the meeting after the restrictions are lifted on May 19<sup>th</sup> should be in person. Mr. Hicks asked if those meetings would then be hybrid or just in-person and Mr. Moore felt that Mr. Pietrasko wasn't really in favor of the hybrid model due to the current technology. Dr. Schuch stressed that there is a requirement that every member of the public be able to clearly hear and see each participant. He felt that if someone makes a complaint, they would have to change how the meetings are held. Dr. Schuch also felt that it's awkward to hold a meeting with the hybrid model, especially with more than one person being remote. He would rather have everyone remote at that point. Mr. Hicks stated that they have 15 or 16 people on the board at ACES plus five or six administrators and it does get complicated.

Mr. Roraback also mentioned that if committee meetings remain remote, that is an environmental advantage with not driving and it also doesn't require any clean-up by the custodial staff.

### **Field Trip Policy - discussion of possible disclaimer regarding overnight travel**

Mr. Hicks reviewed that they had discussion about this at the last meeting and that the plug can be pulled on field trips at any time due to a number of reasons. Mr. Hicks wrote some language which he offered to email to the entire board. He proposed, "Parents or guardians of students anticipating participation in field trips must be made aware that school-sanctioned trips may be withdrawn at any time due to actions of, but not limited to, Homeland Security or other government or law enforcement agencies or health agencies, such as, but not limited to, the Center for Disease Control and that parents or guardians of students be apprised of this possible action."

Mr. Moore felt that language is fine and Mr. Hicks will email the text to the entire board to have a first read at the next board meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Everyone agreed to move the language to the full board.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adjournment**

*Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to adjourn the meeting.*

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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