

BOE Policy Committee Minutes
Monday, April 8, 2024, 9:30 am – 11:00 am
Municipal Building, BOE Conference Room
3 Primrose St. Newtown, CT 06470

CALL TO ORDER Meeting was called to order at 9:32 am

IN ATTENDANCE Doria Linnetz, Don Ramsey, Mark Pompano, Chris Melillo, Sarah Connell, Susan McConnell, Dr. Kim Longobucco, Tim DeJulio

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION Aaron Cox, 31 Pond Brook Road Road, Newtown, CT, shared a personal story about how important it is for details to be communicated when planning a trip. He expressed his gratitude that the committee is working on adopting an International Travel policy.

APPROVE MINUTES Don Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes of March 25, 2024. Doria Linnetz seconded.

Ms. Linnetz reminded Ms. Connell that there were two errors in the March 11th minutes. Mr. Ramsey was marked down as making the motion for approving the minutes as well as seconding them.

There was also a motion missing in the March 11th minutes: "Mr. Ramsey moved to change the title of Policy 4111.3 - Plan for Minority Recruitment and Selection to "Increasing Educator Diversity Plans". Ms. Linnetz seconded. Motion passes unanimously."

Motion passes unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Policy 6114 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness

Ms. Linnetz did not receive any feedback from the Board regarding this policy. Ms. Connell will send it back to Ms. June for the Board's second read and possible approval.

Policy 6114.1 - Fire Emergency Drills / Crisis Response Drills / Bus Safety Drills

There was a question from a Board member regarding the timing of the school bus drills. Mr. Pompano reached out to Alan from All-Star and found out that the drills are done only in the morning. They are not able to do them during their afternoon routes. Ultimately, children need to rely on direction from the bus driver as every emergency situation is different.

Ms. Linnetz will relay that information back to Mr. Leonardi.

Mr. Pompano noted that language in this policy needs to be changed from "may" to "shall" to be consistent with law. Ms. Connell will reach out to CAFE regarding this change.

Policy 6114.7 - Safe Schools

Ms. Linnetz made edits to this policy and sent it to Mr. Melillo, Mr. Pompano and Mrs. Uberti. This policy will be discussed at a future policy meeting.

Policy 6153.1 - International Student Travel

The committee invited Ms. McConnell, Dr. Longobucco and Mr. DeJulio to attend this meeting to discuss international travel at the high school.

Dr. Longobucco provided a brief overview of the different types of student travel. Typically, student trips are run through the high school, where there is a clear process. Under this umbrella, there are two types of trips. The first type is a tour trip, which is with an agency. The second type of trip is under the guidance of NICE at the high school.

The most recent trip to Korea was run through ACES and they make their own rules and guidelines. The high school made the decision to include additional policies and rules to ACES existing guidelines. Dr. Longobucco confidently stated that the high school has a good handle on the school trips, however, there was a big learning curve when working with ACES. There needs to be a clear description on what falls on the school and what falls on the agency.

Dr. Longobucco noted that they work extensively with the school nurses during the planning and execution of these trips.

Dr. Longobucco believes it is important to clearly separate the nurse's role in the trips when it is a Newtown High School trip versus an agency trip.

Ms. Linnetz asked for an outline of the beginning stages of planning a trip.

Dr. Longobucco answered that the first step is that staff would present the trip to her. However, if it is a NICE trip, there is a Board that staff will present to. NICE stands for "Newtown International Center for Education".

After the trip is approved by Dr. Longobucco or NICE, they will write a proposal and send it to the Superintendent and the BOE. If the BOE approves, the chaperones visit the destination alone to do a scouting trip.

Ms. Linnetz asked if these trips are tied to curriculum.

Dr. Longobucco said there are curriculum ties to each trip, however, it is not with a certain class. She believes this is why there is an uptick in students that would like to travel.

Mr. DeJulio shared different forms that students and parents receive ahead of the field trips.

Ms. Linnetz asked if Shipman and Goodwin received the forms.

Mr. DeJulio answered that Shipman and Goodwin created the forms for Newtown.

The committee asked if NICE had a budget.

Dr. Longobucco said that they received money through a grant and accrued money over the span of a couple years.

Ms. McConnell believes it is important to state that there should be a minimum of two chaperones on each trip. There is always a set ratio of chaperones, however, there should always be at least two adults on the trip. It is also critically important to have chaperones of both genders on the trip. The committee agreed.

The committee discussed the possibility of chaperones getting district owned cell phones.

Mr. Melillo offered an option to use the district phone that was offered to him. Mr. Melillo and Dr. Longobucco will discuss their options at a later date.

The committee also discussed that the chaperones should not have to use their own personal credit cards.

Ms. Linnetz offered to edit this policy and then will send to Ms. McConnell, Dr. Longobucco and Mr. DeJulio to review.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Aaron Cox, 31 Pond Brook Road, Newtown stated that he would not let his daughter travel if it wasn't for Ms. McConnell and Mr. DeJulio. He praised them for everything that they do while planning these life changing trips for the students. He also agreed that teachers should not use their own personal cell phones and supported staff getting a district phone for the trips. He suggested that there should be a debriefing with parents and students after each trip to find out what they can improve on.

Mr. Ramsey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Linnetz seconded. Motion was unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 10:31 am.

****THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES****