

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Heidi Keyes, Chair; Artie Kassimis, Shirley Mosby.

STAFF: Anthony Daddona, Deputy Superintendent;
Brenda Williams, Director of Communications

OTHER BOE Non-Committee Member: Mike Barbis,
Bruce Mellion, NFT; Dr. Lynne Moore, Principal West Rocks;
Sara Waters, School Recess Committee Member.

Call to Order

Ms. Keyes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and stated that Committee members were in attendance as listed above, and a quorum was present.

Discussion: Policy 9325 Meeting Conduct

There was a general discussion on public comments and areas that are considered civil. Mr. Kassimis referred to excerpts from the CABA Bylaws and suggested adding the following to the incorporated into amended Policy 9325:

Speakers may offer objective criticism of district operations and programs. but the Board encourages members of the public to address complaints concerning individual district personnel through the proper chain of command. The Chairperson may direct the member of the public to the appropriate means to address concerns brought before the Board: however the Board will not respond with action but will take comments under advisement and direct the comments to the appropriate staff member to address outside of the Board meeting.

Speakers are asked to express themselves in a civil manner, with due respect for the dignity and privacy of others who may be affected by their comments. While it is not the Board's intent to stifle public comment, speakers should be aware that if their statements violate the rights of others under the law of defamation or invasion of privacy. The speaker may be held legally responsible.

**** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMENDED POLICY 9325 WITH THE ABOVE ADDITIONS AND BRING TO THE NEXT FULL BOARD MEETING FOR APPROVAL.**

**** MS. KEYES SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discussion: Outdoor Recess Guidelines

Mr. Daddona reported that a school committee has been set up consisting of two principals, one Assistant Principal, three parents and three teachers. He noted that the discussion has been started with the committee and will be brought on to the School Governance Councils.

There was discussion of other school practices and the issue of non-uniform policy and varying guidelines by school. Mr. Mellion noted that having “Principal Discretion” was key in any decision or direction regarding school recess. He listed the following comments from teachers:

Physical differences by school building with location for recess

Different parts of the City have climate differences that cause weather conditions to fluctuate and affect temperature:

North of the Merritt is colder than along the Sound.

Elevation variances and wind chills pose major temperature differences.

Location of school with limitations of snow removal

Mr. Daddona noted that the playgrounds are not shoveled or sidewalks plowed. There was discussion of the 25 ft. rule for custodial responsibility and Parks & Recreation for the grounds, and DPW for parking lots.

It was noted that all of these factors present difficulty with establishing an outdoor recess “one size fits all” policy than can be applied to all schools.

Ms. Sara Waters, member of the committee, reported that there are state guidelines on recess and she spoke about how there needs to be a policy across the district so that schools are using common practices with it comes to recess. She spoke of conditions such as in classroom space limitations and using recess as a discipline measure.

The discussion then went to physical wellness practices and withholding recess as a punishment tool. It was noted that some children are not properly dressed for outdoor recess and come to school without boots or warm jackets. There were suggestions of providing donated clothing on loan for those cases.

Dr. Moore noted that for Middle School it is one of the only tools available due to the limitations of after school busing that is effective as a consequence for tardiness.

Mr. Kassimis asked to keep the discussion to the issue of outdoor recess and suggested that the discipline and wellness are two separate issues regarding recess policies.

Mr. Barbis stated that the principals are highly paid and qualified administrators that should be able to use their discretion when it comes to outdoor recess involving weather conditions.

Mr. Daddona noted that he will have the committee meet and report their findings to the School PTO’s and Governance Councils, then to the Policy Committee with their recommendations.

Ms. Keyes asked if there could be more representation in the Committee. There was discussion on Mr. Daddona's efforts to recruit building administrators and he noted that he asked several times, but with new assessments the teachers do not have time to serve on this committee.

Ms. Keyes suggested that it can be teachers or parents and not necessarily administrators, but asked to have at least two more people on the committee. Mr. Daddona said he would reach out to the PTOs for more school involvement.

It was suggested for Committee members to come back to the next meeting with any further comments or feedback and recommended changes. Ms. Keyes suggested that after further review by the Policy Committee recommended changes should then be brought to the full Board for approval.

March Agenda:

Ms. Keyes noted that Ralph Valenzisi was unable to attend last month and suggested that the information technology policy items be put on the agenda for the next meeting.
Information Technology Policies_Development of "Bring Your Own Device" Policy (New)
Updates to Telecommunications/Internet – Acceptable Use (6141.321), Computers:
Websites/Pages (6141.322) Internet Acceptable Use: Filtering (6141.323) Electronic Resources.

Other

Ms. Mosby asked for a policy on Out of District placement of students at the Regional Center for the Performing Arts. She noted that there should be consistent direction and an available option for both high schools for students to go to RCA for specialized classes in performing arts.

Mr. Daddona explained that only a few students have used this program, transportation is not provided, no one as ever stayed for the duration and the Norwalk Public Schools gets stuck with the bill. He noted that with uniform scheduling for high school reform, the schools will be transitioning to block scheduling next year. He added that the RCA option may become more available for students based on credit requirements and scheduling.

Adjournment

**** MR. KASIMIS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox,
Telesco Secretarial Services