

**NORWALK BOARD OF EDUCATION  
POLICY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 14, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Heidi Keyes, Chair; Mike Barbis, Erik Anderson,  
Shirley Mosby

STAFF: Dr. Frank Costanzo, Brenda Williams.

Call to Order

Ms. Keyes called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m. and noted that members were in attendance as above listed and there was a quorum present. It was noted that this was a special meeting to review the policy draft that was discussed at the last full Board meeting.

Discussion and Action for Policy 9323 Electronic Participation in Board Meetings

Ms. Keyes explained that the Committee had approved the policy draft to be forwarded to the full Board and now was brought back following concerns expressed to more fully delve into the concerns and some feedback on the request for public input.

Dr. Costanzo presented the attached draft and highlighted the mark-up of changes for further review and discussion.

A discussion ensued on the public expectation for physical attendance by Board members. Questions and comments were fielded, and Ms. Keyes outlined that the intent is to have this as a back up available to members that may be unable to attend due to illness, surgery, vacation or personal business commitments.

There was further discussion on comparisons to other towns, and Dr. Costanzo outlined the policy that Stamford has and explained that this is a city with similar demographics and one that serves as an acceptable comparable analysis. He referred to their policy and highlighted areas where there was need for clarification of limits and protocols for electronic participation.

Ms. Mosby spoke on the public expectation for physical attendance by Board members, and stated her belief that this is a requirement as an elected official to serve the duties as elected to attend meetings. Ms. Keyes explained that while she understands that this is the responsibility of Board members but that the intent of this policy is to allow an exception. She reiterated that this to have this as a back up available to members that may be unable to attend due to illness, surgery, vacation or personal business commitments.

Mr. Barbis stated that as he has previously stated he feels this brings an acceptable practice that is used by other Boards and Commissions of the City as well as surrounding towns and neighboring districts. He added that electronic participation with outlined rules and procedures is common place and should be put forth as an acceptable policy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He added that he sees no reason why this should not be an approved Board policy.

Mr. Anderson stated that he agreed with the reasons aforementioned and fully supports the policy with the limitations and guidelines set forth to provide an alternative to physical attendance by a permitting electronic participation.

Ms. Mosby stated that she would not be voting in favor of this policy regardless of the consensus of the Committee. She reiterated that the public expectation for physical attendance by Board members, and stated her belief that this is a requirement as an elected official to serve the duties as elected to attend meetings.

There was discussion and agreement to have the amended draft document brought to the next full Board meeting for approval. Ms. Mosby stated that she would not be voting in favor of this policy regardless of the consensus of the Committee.

- \*\* MR. BARBIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMENDED DRAFT POLICY 9323 TO THE NEXT FULL BOARD MEETING FOR APPROVAL.  
MR. ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE VOTES IN FAVOR, (ANDERSON, BARBIS, KEYES) NONE OPPOSED AND ONE ABSTENTION (MOSBY).**

#### Discuss Homeschooling Policy

Dr. Costanzo distributed the attached draft policy and reviewed excerpts of the CT Statutes as follows:

6172.3 Instruction Parent Instruction of Children at Home Parents wishing to educate children in the home may do so in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes and regulations of the Connecticut State Board of Education. When parents or guardians are willing to discuss their decision for equivalent education at home with school personnel, school district staff shall explain the advantages of a public school education to such parents or guardians without any criticism of parental choices.

If decisions are made by parents or guardians to return children who for a time have been educated at home to local schools, school staff shall provide an appropriate return to the public schools. Children educated at home are considered to be non-public school students and are not part of the system's educational responsibility and are not part of the school system.

A sample form was presented for discussion and review.

It was agreed to have further independent review and to bring comments, feedback and input to the next meeting for further discussion.

Adjournment

**\*\* MR. BARBIS MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
MR. ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

Respectfully submitted,  
M. Knox,  
Telesco Secretarial Services

Attachment – Draft - Electronic Participation in Board Meetings

Draft - Electronic Participation in Board Meetings - Amendment

Recognizing the inherent responsibility and statutory duties of Board of Education (BoE) members, the Board strongly encourages Board members to attend and participate at meetings of the Board and its committees. Although great importance is given to the physical presence of Board members at meetings, the attendance and participation of members by conference call or two-way video is authorized when physical presence is not practical, subject to the limitations set forth below.

All votes at a meeting in which members are attending by teleconference shall be taken by roll call. Any Board member wishing to participate in a meeting electronically will notify the Board Chairperson and Superintendent as early as possible.

Members of the BoE will be considered “present” for purposes of meetings under Robert’s Rules of Order if they are either (i) physically present in the meeting room designated in the official notice and agenda for a Board or committee meeting or (ii) participating by means of electronic communication devices.

Members participating electronically shall be counted present for purposes of establishing a quorum. A member may participate as of right in up to three Board meetings per calendar year by electronic means; such a member may only participate in more than three Board meetings with the permission of the Board Chairperson. If the Chairperson is participating in the meeting by electronic means, he or she may not chair the meeting; another member of the Executive Committee shall chair the meeting in such a circumstance.

Draft - Electronic Participation in Board Meetings—continued

For purposes of compliance with the State Freedom of Information Act and Roberts Rules, the following requirements will apply to any meetings at which members are participating by electronic means.

1. Arrangements must be made for those members of the public who wish to attend the meeting to be present at a physical location where the greatest number of participating BoE members are located.
2. If any BoE member in the meeting utilizes physical or demonstrable material in the course of the proceedings, that material, or a copy or facsimile of same, must be present in the place where the public is located. That material also must be available for public observation and inspection unless otherwise exempt from disclosure under FOI Act.
2. All those in attendance at the meeting must be able to hear and identify adequately all participants in the proceedings, including their individual remarks and votes, and participate by simultaneous aural communication.
4. Participation in such meetings may, but need not, include two-way video.
5. The Chairperson may decide technical questions regarding whether audio only or video technology will be used, call-in numbers to be used, etc. for such electronic participation at particular meetings.
6. All other provisions of Roberts Rules, not inconsistent with this Policy, will remain in effect and shall govern meetings involving electronic participation.
7. Due to security concerns, electronic participation in closed executive sessions will not be permitted.

## Draft - Policy 9323 amendment – continued

8. The Superintendent will arrange for any meetings involving electronic participation to take place in a location with the appropriate equipment so that the BoE members participating in the meeting electronically may interact effectively and the public may observe any video and hear any comments made.

**Electronic Participation (Optional) CABE does not recommend such participation. However, it is permitted under the law. Therefore this language is provided for consideration and possible inclusion in this bylaw.**

The Board of Education allows electronic participation whenever there is communication by or to a quorum of the Board, whether the communication is in person or by means of electronic equipment. Meetings in which some Board members participate electronically are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Board may allow members to participate in meetings by telephone or other electronic means. Board members may not simply vote electronically, but must be connected with the meeting throughout the discussion of business.

Draft - Electronic Participation in Board Meetings - continued

**If a Board member electronically joins the meeting after an item of business has been opened, the remotely located member shall not participate until the next item of business is opened.**

When a Board member participates electronically, the member will be considered present and will have his or her actual physical presence excused. The member shall be counted present for purposes of convening a quorum. The Board Secretary will document it in the Minutes when members participate in the meeting electronically.

Any Board member wishing to participate in a meeting electronically will notify the Board Chairperson and Superintendent as early as possible. The Superintendent will arrange for the meeting to take place in a location with the appropriate equipment so that Board members participating in the meeting electronically may interact and the public may observe or hear the comments made.

(Each part of the telephone conference call meeting shall be audible to the public at the location specified in the notice for the meeting. The location designated in the notice as the location of the meeting shall provide two-way communication during the entire telephone conference call and the identification of each party to the telephone conference call shall be clearly stated prior to the meeting.)

The Superintendent will take measures to verify the identity of any remotely located participants.