Board of Education Policy Committee Members Present:

Sheila Daniels, Chair - via phone; Christopher Drake

Also Present:


The following policies and bylaws were discussed.

Policy #3320 – Purchasing Procedures – Dr. Charles had requested this policy be reviewed. As a change in procedure will be considered, the Policy Committee felt both the proposed policy and regulation should be brought to the Board’s attention.

Christopher said when they go out to bid for the State, it is a big process. What they do at State is go out for bids for things purchased routinely. Usually the State has eight vendors under contract. What he was thinking is we should use state if we don’t have a bid list. Linda MacPherson said we have several cooperative sites that we use, such as CREC, etc. to check prices. In the beginning of the year, we send to secretaries and other personnel, a new document with the new bid list. We cooperatively make purchases with other governmental agencies whenever it is to the mutual benefit of both cooperating agencies. We are required to follow purchasing policies of the Federal government for federal grants. State and City have their own policies, which also need to be followed for their grants.

The new proposed regulation has more defined bid procedures for three amount categories:

- Purchases between $1 and $5,000
- Purchases between $5,001 and $24,999
- Purchases for $25,000 and Above

The Committee discussed the matter and recommended this revised policy be brought forward to the Board at its next meeting for its first reading. The proposed regulation will also be forwarded to the Board for Informational Purposes.
**#6154 – Homework** - Colleen Weiner and Cheryl Gonzalez addressed this policy. They agreed the suggested guidelines for minutes per week was not necessary and should be removed.

Cheryl stated Plainville has even eliminated homework except for independent reading.

Christopher stated he felt homework should be counted the same amount within the school/department, so all students are treated the same. Also, both he and Sheila agreed homework should not be a big portion of the over-all grade.

After reviewing our current policy and the policies suggested by CABE, the Committee recommended deleting the first two paragraphs of the district’s current policy and inserting the East Lyme policy’s first three paragraphs in its place. It also recommended deleting the Minute guidelines. There were other minor word changes.

Sheila feels students should not get extra credit for nonacademic work; and had questions on extra credit work and how that should be handled. After a discussion on this issue, it was decided that issue should be addressed in Policy #5121 Examination/Grading/ Rating, Policy #6146.1 Grading/Assessment Systems/Weighted Grades and Policy #6146.11 Grading/Changing Grade.

Colleen Weiner stated we should also review Policy #6146 Graduation Requirements (even though the last revision was February 10, 2015) as the laws have changed again and Policy #6146.2 Statewide Proficiency/Mastery- Examinations, too. Review of all of the above policies will address the same issues and make them consistent.

These policies will be brought up by the Policy Committee in the near future.

There is no regulation for this policy #6154 - Homework.

The Committee discussed the matter and recommended this revised policy be brought forward to the Board at its next meeting for its first reading.

**#9321 – Time, Place and Notification of Meetings** - Sheila Daniels spoke to this policy. A new BOE member asked to participate in BOE meetings via Skype or Go to Meeting. The member was permitted to Skype at the last BOE regular meeting, after the City attorney stated it was legal under FOI. As recommended by CABE and FOI, Sheila and other BOE members would like to have a bylaw in place to address the issue. Sheila noted CABE does not recommend such participation, but also noted it is permitted under the law.

Christopher said he was impressed with the City’s ability to get the technology up and running so smoothly in the Council Chambers for the last BOE regular meeting. Pat said we are not technology set up at Central Office to have electronic participation for a BOE regular meeting. She suggested we may want to experiment on how our technology equipment performs at meetings, thereby allowing us to make an informed decision.
Sheila shared her concerns around this issue. All agreed there is a difference in attending a meeting in person and electronically. There was further discussion around types of meetings of Board members, whether it is a monthly meeting of the whole Board, committee meetings, expulsion and executive sessions and that the latter two bring up confidentiality issues. Christopher stated he believed we could not use a blanket rule to cover all meetings and protocol should be set considering each. All agreed.

**Question: In order to be considered part of the quorum, must you be physically present?**

The Board is careful in executive sessions, to keep and maintain confidentiality. All documents that are distributed at the time of the session are collected back at the end of the session. How could the confidential documents be handled – not through email – not secure? As stated above, expulsion sessions are also confidential.

Pat Charles questioned what if three members wanted to participate electronically? How would you pick who can participate, what are the special circumstances which would allow participation and what number of members would be allowed to participate by electronic participation. There is concern around not wanting members to feel they can just phone it in when it isn’t convenient to attend a meeting. We need to develop guidelines as to what reasons are accepted. If we want an electronic policy, it should be fairly narrow and not allowed where confidentially is concerned.

Christopher stated there is a difference in what you can do under FOI and what you can do under your board policy. Just because it can be done doesn’t mean it should be done. Sheila agreed and noted CABE advised the City procedure does not automatically supersede Board policy/bylaw or preference in the absence of either. Christopher noted he sits on many Boards, some allow electronic participation and some do not. At the highest level, a senator cannot participate by phone. He has looked at minutes with electronic participation and it doesn’t yield a productive meeting with three calling in every week.

The committee wanted to discuss this policy further before the next BOE regular meeting and invite all BOE members. A Special Policy Committee meeting has been set up for Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. to be held in the Board Room to address only this policy.

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled tentatively for Tuesday, January 5, 2016, at 8:00 A.M. in the Board Room of the Dr. Alfred B. Tychsen Administration Building.

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