Board of Education Policy Committee Members Present:

Sheila Daniels, Chair, Christopher Drake

Also Present:

Dr. Patricia Charles, Superintendent, Dr. Enza Macri, Associate Superintendent, Mary Emerling, Nurse Supervisor Consultant, Ann Perzan, Director of Pupil Services, and Kathleen F. Bengtson, Administrative Assistant.

The following policies and bylaws were discussed.

#5141.4 – Reporting of Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse - There is a mandatory change in the policy to include the reference to sexual abuse. The Committee reviewed the recommended CABE changes.

Dr. Charles feels this will have a huge impact on her time if she must investigate all reports. This is currently conducted by the school team who knows the child very well. She discussed the change in procedure with the police and they agreed there would be too many persons for the initial investigation. Christopher Drake asked how often these situations occur. Dr. Charles shared an example that this week we have already had two and there have been numerous over the course of the school year. While most are unsubstantiated, the investigation still takes place and can take a lot of time. The requirements for the new regulation procedures of the Confidential Rapid Response Team need clarification.

“Confidential Rapid Response Team

The District will establish, not later than January 1, 2016, a confidential rapid response team to coordinate with DCF to (1) ensure prompt reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect; or 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th degree sexual assault; 1st degree aggravated sexual assault; or 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm of a student not enrolled in adult education by a school employee; and (2) provide immediate access to information and individuals relevant to DCF’s investigation of such cases.

The confidential rapid response team consists of a local teacher, the Superintendent, a local police officer, and any other person the Board of Education deems appropriate.
DCF, along with a multidisciplinary team, is required to take immediate action to investigate and address each report of child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse in any school.”

The majority of the CABE regulation changes were adding the sexual abuse language and the Confidential Rapid Response Team information. This regulation will be prepared and ready to be posted when the policy is adopted.

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

#6140 – Curriculum  Dr. Charles requested this policy be reviewed.

Dr. Macri stated her responsibilities include the development of curriculum for our district. She has reviewed every single item that has been rewritten and it has taken her four years to go through all of it. Dr. Macri said the development of curriculum happens all day long with different teams and different departments. She has approximately 60 different groups working on curriculum at one time in all different subject areas.

Curriculum used to change every 5 years for each subject. Because of the entire shift to Common Core, every single thing that we teach has changed and needs to be addressed. Dr. Macri is constantly looking at how the classes impact student learning.

Dr. Macri said she is fine with the Curriculum Committee members bringing curriculum to the Board, but she is concerned with only a very short overview, the Board might vote down something that might be mandatory - and that would make us out of compliance.

Sheila Daniels noted past precedence of the Board had been to allow the Administration to create and develop curricular, share it with the Curriculum Committee who would then present it to the Board and unless there was a glaring issue, the Board would accept the curricula from the Committee’s recommendation. Even with a degree in education, Sheila would not be comfortable developing/creating curriculum for the district and did not know why a Board would take that work on. Beyond the expertise, the Board would be further challenged to meet the time requirements in this work. She noted further that the Board did vote on textbook purchases. She asked Dr. Charles how she handled the subject in Westbrook. Dr. Charles said she would bring the curriculum notebook so the BOE members could look it over. Dr. Macri said our entire curriculum is on our website and in Google Docs, which she could make available to the Board.

Christopher Drake agreed curriculum needs to be developed by educators. He said if state statutes say we do it, then we must comply. We can do this through our Curriculum Committee as stated in the CABE recommended policy and outlined below.
The C.G.S.10-220(e) states, “Each local and regional board of education shall establish a school district curriculum committee. The committee shall recommend, develop, review and approve all curriculum for the local or regional school district.”

Christopher Drake doesn’t feel the Board needs to look at every single curriculum decision; that is why we have our education administrators. The Committee feels the overall board’s responsibility is providing the classes to meet the graduation credit requirements. Ninety (90%) is mandated by state law. The District has discretion on a few electives. How to teach the student is not something BOE members without educational background (non-educators) should decide.

Sheila Daniels said the board members cannot be on all committees and she trusts the board members on the different committees to bring forth informed decisions.

Enza Macri will create a first draft of the regulation and the review it with Dr. Charles.

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

**#6141 – Curriculum Design/Development** – Kathy Bengtson brought this policy forward as it was also a curriculum policy in an effort to create consistency with the previous policy. This policy, like the preceding one, is a recommended policy and not a mandated policy. After reviewing the policy, it was decided it was not needed.

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

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled tentatively for Tuesday, February 23, 2016, at 8:00 A.M. in the Board Room of the Dr. Alfred B. Tychsen Administration Building.

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