The proposed 2018 Policy Committee Meetings Schedule was reviewed by the Committee and accepted. Kathy Bengtson will post it with the Town Clerk and upload it to the District website.

The following policies and bylaws were reviewed:

#5113 – Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal – POLICY – Our current policy is dated June 27, 2017.

The Attendance Committee has been meeting recently. Brooke Carta stated there should be clarification regarding the appropriate documentation that would be accepted by school officials. The Attendance Committee has requested the following changes be added to the policy:

Such documentation includes a signed and dated note from the student’s parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate. Documentation should explain the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of the absence. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism. Per the Connecticut State Department of Education an email or text message is not an acceptable form of communication to excuse an absence.
Also added to the policy will be additional legal references provided by CABE’s latest documentation on the subject.

The Policy #5113 Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal was reviewed and revised and the Policy Committee recommended it be brought forward to the next BOE meeting for its first reading.

#5113.2 – Truancy – POLICY – Our current policy is dated June 27, 2017. The Attendance Committee also has met on this policy and had requested the following definition be added:

“Habitual truant” shall mean a child five to eighteen, inclusive who has 20 or more unexcused absences in one school year.

Another change is as follows:

“Absence” means an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one half of a school day pursuant to C.G.S. 10-198b.

And under Remediation of Truancy add the following:

4. Make a reasonable effort to notify parents or other persons having control of the child, enrolled in Middletown Public Schools, when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previous approval or other indication which indicates parents are aware of the absence. (Note: Persons who in good faith give or fail to give notice pursuant to this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.)

6. Identify a student as “habitual truant” when the student accumulates 20 or more absences in a school year.

9. When a petition is filed, when a student is identified as truant a referral will be made to the appropriate team (including but not limited to: Climate Team, Student Assistance Team, School Attendance Team, Scientific Research Based Intervention Team, 504 Team, Planning and Placement Team, Middletown Youth Diversion Team) for consideration of further evaluation, intervention or assessment. an educational evaluation of the truant student shall be done by appropriate school personnel if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.
11. If in existence, refer the child to the children’s probate court truancy clinic.

Additions to the Legal references will be:

10-198b State Board of Education to define “excused absence”, “unexcused absence”, and “disciplinary absences”
10-198c Attendance review teams (as amended by PA 17-14)
10-198d Chronic absenteeism

The Policy Committee had an extensive discussion regarding the above policy. Questions about - when a student is identified as truant a referral will be made to the appropriate team - were asked and how the determination was made as to what team would be brought in to help a student. The Committee believed this wording will make it more clear. Dr. Macri stated if a parent requests an IEP, one will be scheduled.

The Policy #5113.2 Truancy was reviewed and revised and the Policy Committee recommended it be brought forward to the next BOE meeting for its first reading.

It was noted that the Attendance Committee is working on the Administrative regulation for this policy, and Jen Cannata will be sending the proposed Regulation to Administrators before next ACM.

Kathy Bengtson brought up the fact that there is also a regulation #5113.1 (with no policy) that addresses Attendance/Excuses/Course Credit. She suggested the Attendance Committee also compare it to the Regulation #5113.2 Truancy to be sure there is no conflicts. Hopefully, both regulations will be sent to the Administrators at the same time.

#9131 – Community Members on Board committees – BYLAW – Our current bylaw is dated March 10, 2015. Christopher Drake, Chair of the BOE, requested the Committee make the following changes.

• When appointing Board members to these committees, the Board Chairperson shall may also appoint one or two parent/community members from this such list to serve in an advisory capacity for each of these committees.

Meg Susi questioned whether using the wording may instead of shall, will give the Board Chairperson the option to not appoint anyone. After discussion, the Committee decided to leave it as follows:

• When appointing Board members to these committees, the Board Chairperson shall also appoint one or two parent/community members from this such list to serve in an advisory capacity for each of these committees.
There was more discussion about how the public is notified of the possibility of being appointed to one of the standing BOE committees. It was the consensus a school messenger should be sent out to inform parents of the sign up process. Cheryl McClellan suggested we should put forth the message - come give us your opinion on the committee. Donna Marino will look into the message we want to convey and work forward on sending this out.

The Bylaw #9131 was reviewed and revised and the Committee recommended it be brought forward to the next BOE meeting for its first reading.

Another subject came forward:

#0300 – Ensuring Education and Racial Equity – Colleen Weiner and Enza Macri both stated we do not want to have something on the website that might conflict with our present procedures. There is no problem with this policy, but the regulation – which was the Analysis Tool - contained procedures which the district was not set up to implement. They suggested it should be taken down. Kathy took it down at the end of the meeting.

Cheryl McClellan asked if there were any policies that should be worked on as we proceeded through the year? Everyone discussed this and agreed to work on one series at a time to bring them up-to-date as best possible. Cheryl proposed to begin working on 9000 series.

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 16, 2017 at 8:30 A.M. /kfb