

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Policy Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Policy Meeting type: Regular
Date of Meeting: 4/30/25 Place of Meeting: Zoom
Members present: Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion
Members absent: Kathy Baker
Other attendees: Ken Craw, Kris Woleck, James D'Amico, Karen Gruetzner, Allyson Story, Dominic Cipollone
Minutes submitted by: Kim La Tourette
Meeting Access: Policy Subcommittee (4/30/25 at 7:00 p.m.)
Web: <https://zoom.us/j/97408983159> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 974 0898 3159

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 25, 2025

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 25, 2025, as presented

Made by: Samantha Manion

Seconded by: Amy Johnson

Recording of Vote: All in favor

III. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Policy 5131.81 - Electronic Devices - Dr. Craw and the administrators plan on sharing information reflecting on this past year. Ken mentioned the presentation on social media that took place on April 21st with parents and members of the community, and how we are looking at this policy due to the health and safety of our students. Dr. Craw provided an overview of the policy at each level and said that having this policy laid out has been helpful.

Mrs. Story shared that they have been following the policy as written - all cell phones and smart watches are put away and kept in backpacks or lockers. She shared data regarding the offenses. They find that most kids who have had an offense usually do not have to be spoken to again. Overall, the policy has been working well for the Elementary School. There have been fewer negative interactions between students.

Mrs. Gruetzner shared that this is the second year of no cell phones from entrance to exit. It has been successful, and even more so this year. She shared data regarding the number of offenses in each of the grades. She commended the staff for following the policy, tracking the offenses, and is thankful for the policy. She has noticed much more positive interactions, more "noise" and kids being kids and playing, as well as less "cyber drama." Ken mentioned how much time it may take to investigate an issue with social media or devices, and sometimes police even needing to be involved. Our administrators have been able to use that time for other things.

Mr. D'Amico shared some pros and challenges with this policy. There have been fewer phones in classrooms and an increased atmosphere in classrooms and the learning commons. Students seem much more attentive, and most are compliant. The challenges include students not being compliant, putting older phones in the holders or claiming they did not have their phone on them, and the clerical upkeep and parent notification. The High School had 497 devices reported and brought to the office since the fall from 266 different students. There are some challenging repeat offenders, including one student having their phone removed 12 times. The High School administration is looking for support and more severe consequences. The committee agreed with changing the policy, to perhaps put it in place at the start of the next school year, to help support the administrators and teachers, as well as to help increase the benefits of using devices less.

Motion: To table this policy until our May meeting, pending changes

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Amy Johnson

Recording of Vote: All in favor

B. Policy 7000 - Concepts and Roles in Planning for Educational Facilities

Dr. Craw appreciates the thought going into acknowledging those that have contributed to our district. The High School is currently working on the "Wall of Honor." There have been recent requests about naming certain facilities. Ken and James shared some guidelines/processes to follow in order to create a more detailed policy. James shared a presentation with the subcommittee. He did a bit of research locally, out of state, and online. The Administration is thinking about replacing the former "Athletic Hall of Fame" with the "NFHS Rebels Hall of Honor" that may be inclusive of athletics, performing arts, distinguished alumni, and community contributions. There may be a nomination window each year, the nominations would be brought to specific groups, and they can decide on the specific number (1 or 2) of selections that would be made and then finally selected by another group.

The administration is looking for the board's endorsement to move forward and streamline this policy and bylaws. They will continue to work on how to pull the "Wall of Honor" into the policy.

Motion: To table this policy pending a finalized draft from the administration

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Amy Johnson

Recording of Vote: All in favor

C. Policy 6172 – Alternative Education Programs

Dr. Craw shared that this is required due to state statute. We have had an ALC program in place.

Motion: To bring this policy to the full Board for its first reading

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Amy Johnson

Recording of Vote: All in favor

IV. OTHER – Samantha asked if we could have an update on the residency policy and hearings. Ken said that we will discuss the two tabled policies from tonight, as well as residency at the next meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Kim LaTourette

Recording of vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at: 8:18 p.m.