

BOARD OF EDUCATION NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Policy Subcommittee Special Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Policy Meeting type: Special
Date of Meeting: 2/17/21
Members Present: Kathy Baker, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Stephanie Strazza
Other Attendees: Dr. Pat Cosentino, Ed Sbordone, Dom Cipollone
Minutes Submitted by: Stephanie Strazza
Meeting Access: Policy Subcommittee (2/17/21) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/91393562585>
Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 913 9356 2585

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 9, 2020 - Regular

Motion: To approve the minutes of December 9, 2020, as presented.

Made by: Kathy Baker

Seconded by: Rick Regan

Recording of Vote: All in favor

III. ACTION ITEMS

A. Policy 5118.111 – Tuition for Students and Staff Members - The committee discussed revising the current policy which allows children of non-resident teachers to enroll in the district, tuition free. The proposed amendment would require currently employed teachers and new hires to begin paying tuition in the upcoming school year, if they have non-resident children enrolled in the district. The committee reviewed the tuition policies of surrounding districts in the region. The rates varied from 5-100% of the district's average per pupil spending. Samantha mentioned that the free tuition was initially offered as an incentive for teachers, at a time when salaries were significantly lower than surrounding districts. The teacher's contract now offers comparable salaries, which makes the perk no longer affordable. Kathy pointed out that offering free tuition was unfair to taxpayers, especially those who do not have children in the schools. Dom mentioned that many residents pay taxes for the schools and also pay to send their children to private school. He suggested that the teachers could consider moving into the community to alleviate the proposed tuition cost. Stephanie expressed concern about the potential negative impact the policy would have on teachers and their families, especially in the wake of the pandemic.

The committee proposed potential tuition rates. It was suggested that current employees be offered a reduced rate. Kathy mentioned the possibility of a scheduled increase over time. Dr. Cosentino suggested that the committee consider implementing the increase when students transition to a new building, if they decide to do so.

Several teachers spoke in opposition to the amended policy. Jeff Giuliani, teacher and union representative, stated his concern that charging tuition could impose financial strain and force teachers to remove their children from the district. Joel Pardalis discussed the accomplishments of the teachers that would be impacted - many have been awarded teacher of the year. The policy change would drive talented staff to seek employment in higher paying districts. Lindsay Mapes spoke about the difficulties in purchasing a home in New Fairfield. The ability to enroll her young children in the district is beneficial to her students and allows her to commit more time to her job. Matt Schlosser stated that the policy would negatively affect families, especially the students.

The committee decided to table the action item and will propose an amendment at the next meeting.

Motion: To table the proposed amendments to Policy 5118.111 – Tuition for Students and Staff Members.

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Second: Kathy Baker

Record of Vote: All in favor

B. Policy 6146 – Graduation Requirements - James D’Amico spoke about the course requirements in respect to graduation, with the implementation of two new career pathways. The committee discussed the following amendments to the policy:

- Section 6146(b): Social Studies credits add **1 credit of US History.*
- Section 6146(c): Amend Diploma of Distinction section to
The Board of Education recognizes students who exceed the credit requirements for graduation by rewarding a Diploma of Distinction based on the requirements set forth below. Beginning with the Class of 2023, Diplomas of Distinction may also be earned by students who complete the requirements of College and Career Pathways, as defined in the New Fairfield High School Program of Studies.
- Section 6146 (d): Amend first header to *Credit Distribution Requirement for Diploma of Academic Distinction for the Class of 2023 and beyond.*
 - Add under Social Studies **1 credit of US History*
 - Omit section titled *For the Class of 2019*
 - Amend header *For the Class of 2021 and beyond* to *For the Class of 2021 and 2022*
 - Add *The Diploma of Highest Distinction will not be available beyond the Class of 2022.*

Diplomas of Distinction in a College and Career Pathway for the Class of 2023 and beyond:

Students may earn a Diploma of Distinction in the following areas, to be designated as such on their official transcript:

Diploma of Allied Health Distinction

Diploma of Arts & Design Distinction

The requirements of College and Career Pathways shall be:

 - *Meeting the credit distribution requirements for graduation from New Fairfield High School*
 - *Meeting the pathway-specific course requirements set forth in the New Fairfield High School Program of Studies, including a minimum of one course in which post-secondary credit may be earned*
 - *Completion of 30 hours of work immersion in the college and career pathway area*
 - *Participation in co-curricular activities as approved by the New Fairfield High School administration and school counseling office*

C. Bylaw 9260 – Board Member Protection - *See omissions and changes.*

D. Bylaw 9310 – Development, Distribution and Maintenance of Manual of Policies, Regulations, Bylaws - *See proposed amendments.*

E. Bylaw 9311 – Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Policies - *See proposed amendments.*

F. Bylaw 9312 – Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Bylaws - *See proposed amendments.*

G. Bylaw 9313 – Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Administrative Regulations - *See proposed amendments.*

H. Bylaw 9314 – Suspension of Policies, Bylaws, Regulation - *See proposed amendments.*

I. Bylaw 9320 – Board of Education Meetings - *See proposed amendments.*

J. Bylaw 9321 – Time, Place, Notification of Meetings, Quorum - *See proposed amendments.*

K. Bylaw 9321.21 – Board of Education Organizational Meeting - *replace show of hands with public vote.*

L. Bylaw 9322 – Public and Executive Sessions - *No changes were recommended.*

M. Bylaw 9323 – Construction of the Agenda/Actions by the Board - *See proposed amendments.*

N. Bylaw 9324 – Advance Delivery of Meeting Material - *See proposed amendments.*

Motion: To recommend the amended Policy 6146 – Graduation Requirements to the full board for approval

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Second: Kathy Baker

Record of Vote: All in favor

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

- A. Bylaws for next review: The committee will review the remaining bylaws at the next meeting.

V. OTHER - There were no additional items.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

Recording of Vote: All in Favor.

Meeting was adjourned at: 8:11 p.m.