

## **Policy Subcommittee Meeting**

Tuesday, March 25, 2025 7:00 PM

Meeting Access: Policy Subcommittee (3/25/25 at 7:00 p.m.) Web:

<https://zoom.us/j/96519060066> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 965 1906 0066, 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

II.A. February 25, 2025 - Regular

### **III. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS**

III.A. Policy 5131.911 - Connecticut School  
Climate Policy

III.B. Policy 6172 - Alternative Education  
Programs

### **IV. OTHER**

### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT**  
**Policy Subcommittee Meeting**

Name of Subcommittee: Policy Meeting type: Regular  
Date of Meeting: 2/25/25 Place of Meeting: Zoom  
Members present: Kathy Baker, Amy Johnson, Samantha Mannion  
Members absent: Kimberly LaTourette  
Other attendees: Ken Crow, Kris Woleck, James D'Amico, Ed Sbordone  
Minutes submitted by: Ken Crow  
**Meeting Access: Policy Subcommittee (2/25/25 at 7:00 p.m.)**  
**Web:** <https://zoom.us/j/93193378513> **Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 931 9337 8513**

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

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. December 11, 2024

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of December 11, 2024, as presented

Made by: Samantha Manion

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

**Recording of Vote:** All in favor

**III. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Policy 4000.1/4200.1 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, including Sex-Based Harassment**

**B. Policy 4118.112/4218.112 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

**C. Policy 5145.44 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment**

**D. Policy 5145.5 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment**

Due to change in Federal law, we need to rescind Policy 4000.1/4200.1 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, including Sex-Based Harassment and Policy 5145.44 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment, and to reinstate Policy 4118.112/4218.112 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Policy 5145.5 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment.

**Motion:** To move to rescind Policy 4000.1/4200.1 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, including Sex-Based Harassment and Policy 5145.44 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

**Recording of Vote:** All in favor

**Motion:** To move to reinstate Policy 4118.112/4218.112 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Policy 5145.5 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

**Recording of Vote:** All in favor

**Motion:** To move to the full Board with suspension of the rules to adopt Policy 4118.112/4218.112 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Policy 5145.5 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment for reinstatement.

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

**Recording of Vote:** All in favor

**E. Policy 6148 - FAFSA Completion Program** – The FAFSA is a financial aid application for students going on to higher education. Both the CABE and Shipman & Goodwin policies were presented for review. Administration will formulate and implement strategies for

the completion of the FAFSA beginning with the Class of 2027 and the goal is to arrive at 100% completion. At the present time, we are at 61% completion. Families have the option of completing the FAFSA or private institution financial aid form or a waiver that would be submitted to NFHS. There is a Financial Aid night at the high school that addresses the FAFSA form and students can schedule meetings with the guidance counselors for assistance in completing this form. There is a webinar about this topic in March. We will present this policy and a list of administrative procedures at a future meeting.

**F. Policy 7000 - Concepts and Roles in Planning for Educational Facilities** – This policy is being reviewed in light of a recent request to name a BOE facility after an individual community member. It is the prerogative of the Board of Education to establish the need and appropriateness for naming any school unit, and when the need has been determined, guidelines will be established by the Board of Education. This policy lacks guidelines, and it was suggested that we research how other towns and Boards of Education deal with such requests. James D’Amico will share his research about this topic with the subcommittee at a future meeting.

**IV. OTHER** – Samantha Mannion requested an update on the cell phone policy and how it is going. James D’Amico will gather data and ideas for moving forward for the April Policy Subcommittee meeting.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn: Made by:** Samantha Mannion

**Seconded by:** Amy Johnson

**Recording of vote:** All in favor

**Meeting adjourned at:** 7:36 p.m.

*A mandated policy.*

## **Students**

### **Connecticut School Climate Policy**

#### **Policy Statement**

All schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success.

Implementation of the following set of guiding principles and systemic strategies will promote a positive school climate, which is essential to achieving these goals.

This policy sets forth the framework for an effective and informed school climate improvement process, which includes a continuous cycle of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, and (iv) implementation, and serves to actualize the Connecticut School Climate Standards, as detailed herein.

The Board recognizes that improving school climate is contextual. Each school needs to consider its history, strengths, needs, and goals. Furthermore, this policy will support and promote the development of restorative action plans that will create and sustain safe and equitable learning environments.

The New Fairfield District Board of Education adopts this policy.

#### **Definitions**

1. **“School climate”** means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.
2. **“Positive Sustained School Climate”** is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:
  - a. Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.
  - b. People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected and solve problems restoratively.
  - c. A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.
  - d. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
  - e. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

## Students

### Connecticut School Climate Policy

#### Definitions (continued)

3. **“Social and emotional learning”** means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.
4. **“Emotional intelligence”** means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.
5. **“Bullying”** means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
6. **“School environment”** means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.
7. **“Cyberbullying”** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any other electronic communication.
8. **“Teen dating violence”** means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.
9. **“Mobile electronic device”** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.
10. **“Electronic communication”** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

## Students

### Connecticut School Climate Policy

#### Definitions (continued)

11. **“School climate improvement plan”** means a building-specific plan developed by the school climate committee, in collaboration with the school climate specialist, using school climate survey data and any other relevant information, through a process that engages all members of the school community and involves such members in a series of overlapping systemic improvements, school-wide instructional practices and relational practices that prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment.
12. **“Restorative practices”** means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.
13. **“School climate survey”** means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant languages of the members of the school community, that measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan.
14. **“Connecticut school climate policy”** means the school climate policy developed, updated and approved by an association in the state that represents boards of education and adopted by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, that provides a framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process that serves to implement Connecticut school climate standards, and includes a continuous cycle of (A) planning and preparation, (B) evaluation, (C) action planning, and (D) implementation.
15. **“School employee”** means (A) a teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, school superintendent, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, paraeducator or coach employed by a local or regional board of education, or (B) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public school, pursuant to a contract with a local or regional board of education.
16. **“School community”** means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

## Students

### Connecticut School Climate Policy

#### Definitions (continued)

17. **“Challenging behavior”** means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.
18. **“Evidence Based Practices”** in education refers to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.
19. **“Effective School Climate Improvement”** is a restorative process that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:
  - A. Promoting decision-making that is collaborative and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;
  - B. Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., school climate survey, discipline data) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive and intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;
  - C. Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students, educators, and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;
  - D. Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity building among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;
  - E. Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning and adult barriers to teaching; and
  - F. Strengthening policies and procedures related to:
    - a. climate and restorative informed teaching and learning environments;
    - b. infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning;
    - c. implementation of school climate improvement plans with the goal of becoming restorative;
    - d. evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and
    - e. sustainability of school climate and restorative improvement efforts.

## **Students**

### **Connecticut School Climate Policy (continued)**

#### **School Climate Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the superintendent of schools for each school district, or an administrator appointed by the superintendent, shall serve as the school climate coordinator for the school district.

The school climate coordinator shall be responsible for:

1. providing district-level leadership and support for the implementation of the school climate improvement plan for each school;
2. collaborating with the school climate specialist, for each school to (A) develop a continuum of strategies to prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment, and (B) communicate such strategies to the school community, including, but not limited to, through publication in the district student handbook;
3. collecting and maintaining data regarding school climate improvement, including, but not limited to, school discipline records, school climate assessments, attendance rates, social and emotional learning assessments, academic growth data, types and numbers of alleged and verified bullying complaints submitted by members of the school community, types and numbers of challenging behaviors addressed using the restorative practices response policy, and data concerning the implementation and outcome of restorative practices; and
4. meeting with the school climate specialist for each school at least twice during the school year to (A) identify strategies to improve school climate, including, but not limited to, by responding to challenging behavior and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, such as restorative practices, (B) propose recommendations for revisions to the school climate improvement plan, and (C) assist with the completion of the school climate survey.

#### **School Climate Specialist**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the principal of each school, or a school employee who holds professional certification pursuant to section 10-145 of the general statutes, is trained in school climate improvement or restorative practices and is designated as the school climate specialist by the school principal, shall serve as the school climate specialist for the school.

The school climate specialist shall be responsible for:

1. leading in the prevention, identification, and response to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, reports of alleged bullying and harassment;

## **Students**

### **Connecticut School Climate Policy**

#### **School Climate Specialist** (continued)

2. implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices;
3. scheduling meetings for and leading the school climate committee; and
4. leading the implementation of the school climate improvement plan.

#### **School Climate Committee**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, each school climate specialist shall appoint members to the school climate committee who are diverse, including members who are racially, culturally, and linguistically representative of various roles in the school community.

The school climate committee shall consist of:

1. the school climate specialist;
2. a teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b of the general statutes;
3. a demographically representative group of students enrolled at the school, as developmentally appropriate;
4. families of students enrolled at the school; and
5. at least two members of the school community, as determined by the school climate specialist.

Membership of the school climate committee shall be annually reviewed and approved by the school climate specialist, in coordination with the school climate coordinator.

The school climate committee shall be responsible for:

1. assisting in the development, annual scheduling, and administration of the school climate survey, and reviewing of the school climate survey data.
2. using the school climate survey data to identify strengths and challenges to improve school climate, and to create or propose revisions to the school climate improvement plan.

## **Students**

### **Connecticut School Climate Policy**

#### **School Climate Committee** (continued)

3. assisting in the implementation of the school climate improvement plan and recommending any improvements or revisions to the plan.
4. advising on strategies to improve school climate and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices, in the school community.
5. annually providing notice of the uniform challenging behavior and/or bullying complaint form, or similar complaint form used by the school, to the school community.

#### **School Climate Survey**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and biennially thereafter, the school climate committee, for each school, shall administer a school climate survey to students, school employees and families of students, provided the parent or guardian of each student shall receive prior written notice of the content and administration of such school climate survey and shall have a reasonable opportunity to opt such student out of such school climate survey.

#### **School Climate Improvement Plan**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the school climate specialist, for each school, in collaboration with the school climate coordinator, shall develop, and update as necessary, a school climate improvement plan. Such plan shall be based on the results of the school climate survey, any recommendations from the school climate committee, including the protocols, supports, and any other data the school climate specialist and school climate coordinator deem relevant. Such plan shall be submitted to the school climate coordinator for review and approval on or before December thirty-first of each school year. Upon approval of such plan, a written or electronic copy of such plan shall be made available to members of the school community and such plan shall be used in the prevention of, identification of and response to all challenging behavior.

Additionally, districts may place the school climate improvement plans into their district and school improvement plans.

#### **Training**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2024, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional Board of Education shall provide resources and training to school employees regarding:

1. social and emotional learning;
2. school climate and culture and evidence and research-based interventions; and
3. restorative practices.

## **Students**

### **Connecticut School Climate Policy**

#### **Training** (continued)

Such resources and training may be made available at each school under the jurisdiction of such board and include technical assistance in the implementation of a school climate improvement plan. Any school employee may participate in any such training offered by the board under this section. The school climate coordinator, shall select, and approve, the individuals or organizations that will provide such training.

#### **Funding**

The school district shall in its discretion allocate sufficient funding to satisfy the requirements of this policy for all schools in the district. Such funding shall be distributed accordingly, with Superintendent approval, for assessments and professional development, as well as for school community outreach, training, and technical assistance.

#### **Accountability**

The Board shall adopt and allocate adequate resources to support the Connecticut School Climate Policy and adhere to state regulations set forth in Public Act 23-167.

### **Connecticut School Climate Standards**

1. The school district community<sup>1</sup> has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate<sup>2</sup> that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behavior<sup>3</sup>.
2. The school district community adopts policies that promote:
  - a. a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and
  - b. a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally re-engaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.

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<sup>1</sup> School Community means any individuals, groups or businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

<sup>2</sup> School climate means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life, and that reflects the norms, goals, values and interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.

<sup>3</sup> Challenging behavior means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

## Students

### Connecticut School Climate Policy

#### Connecticut School Climate Standards (continued)

3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to:
  - a. promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students;
  - b. enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities;
  - c. address barriers to teaching and learning; and
  - d. develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.
4. The school community creates a school environment<sup>4</sup> where *everyone* is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities.
5. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, P.A. 11-232, P.A. 14-172 and PA 18-15 and PA 19-166.  
10-222g Prevention and intervention strategy re bullying and teen dating violence  
10-222h Analysis of school districts' efforts re prevention of and response to bullying in schools. School climate assessment instruments  
10-222i State-wide safe school climate resource network. *[Repealed, Effective 7/1/2025 State-wide safe school climate resource network]*  
10-222k District safe school climate coordinator. Safe school climate specialist. Safe school climate committee (as amended by PA 21-95, Section 14)  
10-222p Review of safe school climate plans by Department of Education. Approval or rejection.  
PA 23-167 An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

Policy adopted:

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
New Fairfield, Connecticut

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<sup>4</sup> School environment means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs if bullying at or during such other activities, functions, or programs negatively impacts the school environment.



*A new policy to consider. Boards of education that have approved an alternative program are mandated to have a policy on this topic.*

## **Instruction**

### **Alternative Education Programs**

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the need for alternative education programs for some District students.

The Board of Education (Board) is dedicated to providing educational options for all students within available financial constraints. It is recognized that there will be students in the District whose needs and interests are best served by participation in an alternative education program. The Board believes alternative education is a student-focused perspective based on respect for students, the belief that all students can learn given the right environment, and participation in an alternative setting is an informed choice made by students and their families.

**“Alternative education”** means a school or program maintained and operated by the Board that is offered to students in a nontraditional educational setting and addresses the social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs of such students. Alternative education does not, for purposes of this policy, and Connecticut State Board of Education (CSDE) guidelines, include private schools, homeschooling, *“School Choice,”* adult education, approved private special education programs, gifted and talented programs, and schools or programs within the Connecticut Technical High School System.

The Board shall provide alternative education to students in accordance and compliance with the *“Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings,”* established by the State Board of Education. Such guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, a description of the purpose and expectation of alternative education, criteria for student eligibility, and criteria for how and when a student may enter or exit alternative education. The philosophy of alternative education utilizes a whole-student approach. This approach promotes individualized programming to address students' personal, emotional, social, intellectual, work skills, safety and security needs and academic achievement. The Board views enrollment in an alternative setting not as punishment but as a learning opportunity.

In providing alternative education to students, the Board may use space in an existing school, establish a new school, or establish a program affiliated with one or more schools or districts. Programs must be affiliated with at least one district with a code previously assigned by CSDE. Such programs must comply with state laws pertaining to the number and length of school days in an academic year and shall be subject to all other federal and state laws governing public schools.

The Board may form a cooperative arrangement with other boards of education to provide alternative education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-158a.

## Instruction

### Alternative Education Programs (continued)

*Such an arrangement may include the establishment of a committee to supervise the program, with committee membership determined by cooperating boards. Such committee shall have the power, in accordance with the terms of the agreement, to (1) apply for, receive directly and expend on behalf of the school districts which have designated the committee an agent for such purpose any state or federal grants which may be allocated to school districts for specified programs, the supervision of which has been delegated to such committee, provided such grants are payable before implementation of any such program or are to reimburse the committee for transportation provided to a school operated by a cooperative arrangement; (2) receive and disburse funds appropriated to the use of such committee by the cooperating school districts, the state or the United States, or given to the committee by individuals or private corporations; (3) hold title to real or personal property in trust, or as otherwise agreed to by the parties, for the appointing boards; (4) employ personnel; (5) enter into contracts; and (6) otherwise provide the specified programs, services and activities. Teachers employed by any such committee shall be subject to the provisions of the general statutes applicable to teachers employed by the board of education of any town or regional school district.*

A list of alternative programs will be approved by the Board annually. The Superintendent may/shall provide for the involvement of staff, parents and the community in recommending alternative education programs for Board approval. The alternative education program, subject to Board approval, must have a transparent and defined purpose, including a description of the students that may benefit most from the program/school environment. Clear and objective admission criteria, consistent with stated program guidelines, must be evident. Also, to be a part of the alternative education program, clear and explicit criteria and procedural exit criteria frameworks must be used to address a student's return to the traditional school setting. There shall be an annual evaluation of alternative education programs.

The Board, as required, will post information about any alternative education offered on its website, including purpose, location, contact information, staff directory, and enrollment criteria. Determination of enrollment shall be made by the student support team, which includes, but is not limited to, parent or family representative, student (if in secondary school), appropriate representative of the alternative environment, student's teachers, school administrator and if the student is identified as disabled, a special education teacher or PPT/504 Team representative. In addition, the Board recognizes its responsibility to give all children in the District who receive alternative education as nearly equal advantages as may be practicable compared to other children in the District. In addition, the Board shall annually submit to the Commissioner of Education a strategic school profile report for each alternative school or program under its jurisdiction.

All students in an alternative education program shall receive instruction based on a curriculum aligned to the Connecticut Core State Standards, unless modified in particular curricular areas as indicated by the goals and objectives of an IEP.

## Instruction

### Alternative Education Programs (continued)

Alternative education programs implemented by the District are meant to maintain flexible learning options regarding environment, structure, and pedagogy. Such programs include but are not limited to, a separate school, tutorial instruction, small group instruction, large group instruction, counseling and guidance, computer-assisted instruction, cooperative work experience, supervised community service activities, and supervised independent study. Before considering an alternative placement, a review of the student's academic, health, and behavioral records, including any PPT and Section 504 records, Student Success Plans, and other history of interventions, must occur.

Students may be placed in an alternative education program within available financial resources upon parent request if the District determines that the placement serves the student's educational needs and interests and assists the student in achieving district and state academic content standards. Families shall have a right of appeal if they disagree with the District's placement decisions.

The implementation of this policy and any Board approval of an alternative education program are subject to the requirements and procedures enumerated in the administrative regulation.

(cf. 6172.11 – Relations with Charter Schools)

(cf. 6172.12 – Magnet Schools)

(cf. 6172.41 – Title I Program)

(cf. 6172.6 – Virtual/Online Courses)

#### Legal Reference

#### Connecticut General Statutes

10-4p(b) Implementation plan to achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity. Assessment. Reports. (as amended by PA 15-133)

10-15 Towns to maintain schools.

10-16 Length of school year.

10-158a Cooperative arrangements among towns. School building projects. Student transportation.

10-220 Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-133)

## **Instruction**

### **Alternative Education Programs**

10-223h(c) Commissioner's network of schools. Turnaround committees. Operations and instructional audit. Turnaround plans. Report. (as amended by PA 15-133)

PA 15-133 An Act Concerning Alternative Education

Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings, State Department of Education, approved by CT State Board of Education, Oct. 5, 2016.

**Policy adopted:**

cps 11/15  
rev 4/17  
rev 9/24

**NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**New Fairfield, Connecticut**

*An administrative regulation to consider.*

## **Instruction**

### **Alternative Education Programs**

In developing an alternative education program to be presented to the Board of Education for its approval and budgetary support, these regulations provide the basis for such a program.

### **Program Philosophy**

The basic tenets of an alternative education program shall include the following basic principles:

1. A philosophy of high expectations is evidenced through the program's documented mission and vision statements that are visible and available to all school/program community members.
2. The school/program embraces the concept that all students are capable and can be successful.
3. As part of the overall philosophy of the alternative education setting, family involvement is welcomed and actively supported. Families are considered equal partners and involved in all decision-making processes for their child's learning and personal success.
4. A climate must be created that supports receiving input from families and bi-directional communication to share information about the student's progress at home and school.
5. Enrollment in the alternative setting is an informed choice by students and their respective families. An orientation or information session is provided to explain the program and student expectations.
6. Students and their families shall be regularly informed of their progress through the mandated and personalized "Student Success Plan."
7. All students in the program shall receive instruction based on a curriculum aligned to the CT Core State Standards (CSS) unless modified by the goals and objectives of an IEP or Section 504 plan in particular curricular areas.
8. Instructional practices must be culturally relevant to promote understanding and respect for enrolled students and include their perspectives and interests within an inclusive learning environment to accommodate different learning styles and abilities through flexible groupings.
9. Students are provided support to transition into postsecondary training and employment.
10. All staff, students, and families will consider cultural differences as critical to understanding personal needs, and accommodations will be made for cultural differences to allow for personal success within the learning alternative(s).

## **Instruction**

### **Alternative Education Programs (continued)**

#### **Guidelines for Student Placement**

Student placement in an alternative education setting must include the following written policy direction:

1. **Prior to Referral**

Before consideration of alternative placement, the following need to take place:

- A review of the student's academic, health and behavioral records, including planning and placement team (PPT) or 504 records, student success plans (SSP), and the efficacy of tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions;
- Assurance that Child Find requirements have been complied with;
- Students may be referred from the following sources: parent, student (self or peer), school or district.

2. **Entrance Criteria**

The Board of Education is required to approve the development of alternative education settings to ensure the following:

- The alternative education program/school has a transparent and defined purpose, including a description of the types of students that may benefit most from the program/school environment.
- Alternative education schools and programs develop clear and objective criteria for admission consistent with stated program guidelines provided to students and their parents/guardians at the time of admittance into the alternative setting.

3. **Process**

The student and parents/guardians are provided with an accurate and comprehensive description of the alternative education delivered. There are culturally and linguistically responsive family and student engagement practices regarding all aspects of decision-making related to placement. The team will ensure that parents/guardians know and understand how the alternative education placement will benefit their child.

Determination of enrollment is made by the student support team involved in the placement, which includes but is not limited to parent or family representative, student, if in secondary school, appropriate representative of the alternative environment, student's teachers, school administrator (sending school), special education administrator or designee and PPT/504 Team (if the student has an identified disability).

If there is disagreement with the placement decision, there must be a clear process written in policy by the Board delineating a family's right of appeal.

The entrance criteria and procedures must be explicitly written in each alternative education program/school handbook and provided to parents/guardians and students in the language of the home at the time of admittance into the alternative setting.

## **Instruction**

### **Alternative Education Programs (continued)**

#### **Guidelines for Continued or Discontinued Student Placement**

To ensure that continued placement in the alternative setting is appropriate, the District's written policy must have a clear process to include the following:

1. **Annual Review**

A review of the appropriateness of placement occurs at least annually with a team. The following issues are to be considered:

- A review of program goals to reinforce student and parent choice regarding placement.
- A review of the student's program of study and alignment to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, where appropriate.
- Members of the team include, but are not limited to, parent or family representative, student, if in secondary school, appropriate representative of the alternative environment, student's teachers, school administrator or designee (receiving school – if applicable), and if the student has an identified disability, special education administrator or designee.

2. **Exit Criteria**

Alternative education settings must adopt clear and explicit criteria and procedural frameworks to address the following:

- A return to the traditional school setting by an informed choice of the student and their family.
- A determination that the setting is no longer beneficial to the student.

3. **Process**

Student transition from an alternative education setting shall be made as follows:

- Transition planning for placement outside of the alternative education setting is related to the annual review to ensure the continuity of support.
- The transition plan provides recommendations consistent with the student's future educational plans as evidenced by their student success plan.
- The transition plan is aligned with the student's IEP goals where appropriate.
- Members of the team include, but are not limited to, parent or family representative, student, if in secondary school, the appropriate representative of the alternative environment, student's teachers, school administrator or designee (receiving school – if applicable), and if the student has an identified disability, special education administrator or designee.

## **Instruction**

### **Alternative Education Programs**

#### **Guidelines for Continued or Discontinued Student Placement** (continued)

If there is disagreement with the placement decision, there must be a clear process written in the Board's policy by the LEA Board of Education, delineating a family's right of appeal.

The exit criteria and procedures must be explicitly written in each alternative education program/school handbook and provided to parents/guardians and students in the language of the home at the time of admittance into the alternative setting.

**Regulation approved:**

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**NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
New Fairfield, Connecticut