

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Heidi Keyes, Chair; Michael Lyons, Artie Kassimis, Rosa Murray.
STAFF: Dr. Manuel Rivera, Superintendent; Tony Daddona, Deputy Superintendent;
Brenda Williams, Communications Director
Others: Gloria Tenofsky, NEF; Shirley Mosby, BOE Member

Call to Order

Ms. Keyes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated that Committee members were in attendance as listed above, and a quorum was present.

Discussion of Norwalk's Draft Policy for Achieving our Vision and Goals

Ms. Keyes provided a draft of the policy revision (see attached supplemental page 3)

Dr. Rivera explained that with the changes to the mission statement we should look at updating policies as related to those changes. He outlined that the proposed new mission is reflected in this proposed policy that includes a vision and values for students, schools and community, something the current policy does not have. He highlighted the primary goals expressed in the proposed policy and goals of meeting learning expectations by grade level. He added that the current policy is less direct with wording like effective, whereas the new policy lists the goals as specific action points based on what was outlined during the budget forums and presentations.

Following the discussion, it was agreed to forward the policy on to the full Board for adoption

- ** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO FORWARD THE ABOVE POLICY DRAFT TO THE FULL BOARD FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION.**
- ** MR. LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discussion of Plan and Schedule for Adoption of Strategic Plan Policies

Dr. Rivera provided the following outline of policy considerations for discussion:.

- February: Norwalk BOE School District Policy affirming our "Plan" and "Priority Initiatives":
Policy draft presented and forwarded to the full Board for action.
- March: Literacy Policy, Tentative: Principal and Administrator Hiring. Possible revisions to Diversity Hiring Policy; Student Placement Policy (out of district placement, etc.)
- April: Special Education: Revisions of special education policies, necessary to comply with new direction standards and any regulatory changes.
- May: Internships; Graduation Requirements; Grading Policy; Technology Use Policy
- June: School Governance Councils

Dr. Rivera gave an overview of his rationale in support of the policy reviews and development over the next few months and proposed the Board begin evaluating other policies. He highlighted for next month looking at the literacy policy, administrator hiring and the student placement policy. Before June, Dr. Rivera recommended looking at special education policies, internships, graduation requirements and school governance councils. He explained that here in the state of Connecticut, school governance councils are mandated by the Commissioner and he recommends it be locally determined as there is a lot of value to them.

Ms. Keyes noted that this is a great start, there's a lot going on here, and it's going to take time, but if we try to stick to this type of schedule, it'll work out. It was agreed to have the above schedule as a guideline for future meeting agendas.

Dr. Rivera added that if there were other areas for consideration of policy review to e-mail him with any suggestions.

Discussion of Bylaws Amendment to Modify Committee Structure

Mr. Lyons provided an outline of bylaws for discussion and noted that this was taken from Stratford Public Schools to serve as a guideline (see attached supplemental page 4):

Mr. Kassimis suggested the following:

- Need to specify the members of the Executive Committee: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary.
- Negotiations/Personnel Committee role should not limit the involvement of the full Board.

Mr. Lyons explained that all non-arbitrated contracts must come to the full Board according to state statutes. He added that he will incorporate revised language to this regard, and will send this to the Committee Chairs for input and discussion with the members for feedback.

Ms. Murray asked that this be highlighted, and Mr. Lyons noted that he will red-line the changes and circulate to all Board members for review and input.

Mr. Lyons explained that the assignment of committees was kept the same as was done by the previous Chairman. Ms. Murray stated that this was never brought to the Board for a vote, and it is important to reach out to those members with past experience for review of this.

Discussion of Provision for Electronic Participation in Meetings.

Mr. Lyons presented the attached draft for review (supplemental page 5).

Mr. Kassimis stated that he feels it is important to be physically present for the public. There was discussion on the potential misuse of the policy where chronic absences can be justified with the use of an electronic device. Ms. Keyes stated that she agrees and asked to have some modified language that would indicate the conditions to when electronic presence could be used as an exception to the rule. She asked to have another draft for review and to discuss with all Committee members for feedback.

Adjournment

- ** MR. KASIMIS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MS. KEYES SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Knox, Telesco Secretarial Services

Supplemental Attachments:

- Page 3: Norwalk's Draft Policy for Achieving our Vision and Goals
- Page 4: Draft of Bylaw Amendment-Committee Structure
- Page 5: Draft of By-law amendment for Electronic Participation in Meetings

Draft Policy for Achieving our Vision and Goals

Mission-Goals-Objectives - Goals/Objectives/Strategies for Norwalk Public Schools

Primary Goal:

- To close the Achievement Gap by 2020 and assure that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity or economic circumstances, are meeting high standards.

Additional Goals:

- All children are ready to enter Kindergarten.
- All students are "on track" to meet or exceed learning expectations by the end of Grade 3.
- Students meet the goal level in 3rd Grade reading.
- Children demonstrate Mastery in CCSS Mathematics.
- Students demonstrate Mastery in CCSS English Language Arts.
- English Language Learners (ELL) students meet /exceed State Annual Achievement Objectives
- Norwalk's schools reach higher performance.
- Norwalk students graduate from high-school "College and Career Ready."

The Board will periodically weigh evidence to measure progress towards reaching these goals.

Strategies:

To realize our mission, vision, and values, and to strive for the goals we have set for our students and our schools, Norwalk Public Schools will implement strategic plans that include the following focus areas and priorities:

- Create a culture of accountability where high expectations, standards drive our behavior and actions.
- Build the knowledge, skills and capacity of teachers, staff and school leaders through a cycle of continuous improvement.
- Improve or transform the learning environment for all students.
- Provide the systems, structures and tools necessary to support a world-class learning environment.
- Create a Pre-K through College and Career mindset for students and parents.
- Enhance Special Education programs and implement effective quality control and decision making.
- Collaborate with partners, engage parents/guardians with community-wide effort to support mission.

Committees: The following Standing Committees shall be appointed by the Board Chairperson:

Executive Committee, Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Finance Committee, Negotiations and Personnel Committee, Policy Committee, and School Facilities/Planning Committee.

The duties of the following committees shall be:

1. Executive Committee: To choose the time/place of Board meetings and set the agendas for meetings.

2. Curriculum and Instruction Committee

- To review all curriculum and instructional programs at all levels of the school system, and to recommend to the Board curriculum enhancements in accordance with state requirements and national best practices
- To serve as the district curriculum committee under C.G.S. Sec. 10-220(e)
- To serve as the district professional development committee under C.G.S. Sec. 10-220a(b)
- To review and recommend approval of textbooks and other curricular materials
- To review course additions or deletions
- To review applications and proposals for curriculum programs
- To monitor the effectiveness of approved programs

3. Finance Committee: • To work with the Superintendent/Chief Financial Officer to develop rolling 3-year pro-forma budgets and the official budget for the following fiscal years. • To hold public meetings and recommend changes in the budgets

• To submit the pro-forma and official budgets to the Board for final approval, briefing the Board on their development and impact on the overall educational program, and on the alignment of the budgets with the goals for the schools approved by the Board.

• To make recommendations to the Board on methods of financial reporting and on improvements to financial systems and procedures

• To review changes in the operating budget that involve the reallocation of funds from one major category to another and recommend to the Board transfers of funds

• To keep the Board informed on school financial legislation

• To report to the Board on a regular basis the status of the current fiscal year's budget and projections for year-end results. • To keep the public informed on the budget's status at monthly meetings as necessary.

Negotiations and Personnel Committee.

• To negotiate, on behalf of the Board, all collective bargaining agreements with unions representing Board employees

• To review and make recommendations concerning personnel policies for all employees of the Board

• To review and make recommendations for evaluation procedures for all employee groups.

• To act in an advisory capacity on qualifications, procedures, and processes for candidate selection

• To review proposed supervisory and administrative appointments before submission to full Board.

Policy Committee

• To review and, when needed, propose revisions to all Board policies, regulations and Bylaws as needed to ensure consistency with the district mission statement, strategic plan, and best practices

• Together with Board counsel and other advisors, to review and, when needed, propose revisions to all Board policies, regulations and Bylaws for compliance with state and federal laws • To develop new Board policies as appropriate • To monitor implementation of adopted policies

School Facilities / Planning Committee • To recommend building use policies, including rental rate policy. • To review population trends and the effect on school enrollments. • To review proposals for optimal facility utilization and districting of students. • To review and prepare plans for alterations and renovations to school facilities. • To prepare a five-year capital improvement plan

• To work with the City Facilities Construction Commission on school facilities construction projects.

Other Committees

The Board Chairperson may appoint temporary committees to study special topics or issues from time to time, naming the members and chairpersons of such committees

By-law amendment for Electronic Participation in Meetings.

Members of the Board of Education will be considered “present” for purposes of meetings under Robert’s Rules of Order if they are either physically present in the meeting room designated in the official notice and agenda for a Board or Committee meeting or (ii) participating by means of electronic communication devices.

For purposes of compliance with the State Freedom of Information Act and Roberts Rules, the following requirements will apply to any meetings in which members are participating by electronic means:

1. Arrangements must be made for those members of the public who wish to attend the meeting to be present at a physical location where the greatest number of participating Board of Education members are located, usually at Norwalk City Hall.
2. If any Board of Education member or other participant in the meeting utilizes physical or demonstrable material in the course of the proceedings, that material, or a copy or facsimile of same, must be present in the place where the public is located. That material also must be available for public observation and inspection, unless otherwise exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act.
3. All those in attendance at the meeting, at whatever location, must be able to hear and identify adequately all participants in the proceedings, including their individual remarks and votes, and participate by simultaneous aural communication.
4. Participation in such meetings may, but need not, include two-way video.
5. The Chairperson may decide technical questions regarding whether audio only or video technology will be used, call-in numbers to be used, etc., for such electronic participation at particular meetings.
6. All other provisions of Roberts Rules, not inconsistent with this Policy, will remain in effect and shall govern meetings involving electronic participation.