

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

ATTENDANCE: Heidi Keyes, Chair; Artie Kassimis, Sherelle Harris.

STAFF: Dr. Manuel Rivera, Superintendent; Brenda Williams, Communications Director; Gloria Tenofsky, NEF;

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 Recommended Revisions for Policy 0220 - 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 and highlighted the area of special education that was included in goals of meeting learning expectations by grade level. He added that the new policy lists the goals on how special education and ELL areas are measured against the goals.

Following the discussion, it was agreed to forward the policy on to the full Board for adoption. Ms. Harris asked if this has to go again for information and discussion, and Mr. Kassimis clarified that it had already been for discussion and can now go on for action.

**** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO FORWARD THE ABOVE POLICY 0220 TO THE FULL BOARD FOR ADOPTION AND APPROVAL.**

**** MS. HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Continued Discussion of Board Policy re: Electronic Participation in Meetings

Mr. Kassimis stated as he discussed last month, he feels strongly that the public wants to see their elected officials. He explained that although it was mentioned that the BET and other committees have used electronic participation, those are appointed Boards, whereas the BOE are elected positions. Ms. Keyes stated she agrees it is important to have the physically presence. Mr. Kassimis added that the technical issues of moving the equipment needed for Skype, when there are meeting room changes, is another factor that complicates the issue and makes electronic participation difficult.

Ms. Keyes stated that Mr. Lyons had agreed to withdraw his proposed policy revision for now, and perhaps revisit it at another time.

- ** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO NOT RECOMMEND THE DRAFT POLICY FOR ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS.**
- ** MS. KEYES SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discussion of Agenda Items for April Meeting

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

March: Principal and Administrator Hiring.

April: Special Education:

Revisions of special education policies, necessary to comply with the new direction, standards and any regulatory changes.

Diversity Employment Plan and Commitment to Affirmative Action.

May: Student Placement Policy - out of district placement

Graduation Requirements; Grading Policy;

June: Technology Use Policy

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 administrator hiring and the student placement policy and reported that he has met with Bruce Morris and Dr. Dylewski and NASA representatives. He explained that in view of reorganization plans, and A.P. position changes there are highly sensitive issues and it is important to get this implementation right.

He spoke about the creation of a committee or task force to consist of union representation from NASA, NFT, staff members from HR, and Principals, and which will be made up in accordance with the policy. It was suggested to include PTO reps, PTO Council and Common Core District Data Teams.

Before June, Dr. Rivera recommended looking at special education policies, and graduation requirements. 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. A discussion ensued over the relationship of CCSS to the involvement of the Governance Councils and the need to have clearly defined roles.

With regard to technology, he explained that Mr. Valencizi feels that current policy is outdated with changing technology system-wide.

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. Kassimis suggested the review be continued next month upon the Mr. Lyons return.

Other Items

Mr. Kassimis asked about the conference policy for early dismissals of all grade levels even though only elementary schools have conferences. It was noted that this may be due to transportation or the need for older siblings to be home to take care of the younger siblings. Dr. Rivera noted that he would look into the applicable policy rationale.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox,
Telesco Secretarial Services

Supplemental Attachments:
Page 4: Norwalk's 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 are at or above grade level in 3rd Grade reading.
- ▶ Students demonstrate Mastery in CCSS Mathematics.
- ▶ Students demonstrate Mastery in CCSS English Language Arts.
- ▶ English Language Learners (ELL) students meet or exceed State Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives.
- ▶ Special Education students achieve Mastery on their annual individual goals and 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 and 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 **PreK through College and Career mindset** for students and parents.
- ▶ Enhance **Special Education programs** and implement effective quality control and decision making.
- ▶ Collaborate with partners and engage parents/guardians with a **community-wide effort** to support our mission.