

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Policy Committee met in Special Session on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback

Committee members absent: Ms. Adams, Mr. Stone

Board members present: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Booth

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance, Mr. Pietrasko, Director of Infrastructure and Security Technology, and Mrs. Keane, Director of Student Services and Special Education

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Approval of Minutes - February 16, 2022**

*Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the minutes of February 16, 2022, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of February 16, 2022, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Discuss adding scholarships to Advertising, Promotion and Commercial Activities policy**

Mrs. Neubig explained that the policy has been approved at a full board meeting and included advertising at the athletic fields. When discussing the use of the funds, the Benchwarmers notified Mrs. Neubig that they wanted to do something with scholarships to students. She noted that that is not what the policy says currently. Mr. Moore felt that this would not be included under Title IX, but Mrs. Neubig stated that they could make that a requirement. She felt that they just needed to note that scholarships were an acceptable use of the funds and could identify the percentage which could be used for that.

Henry Bugai stated that, per their bylaws, all of the money raised by the Benchwarmers has to be spent on Coginchaug athletes and they are now asking if scholarships can be included. Dr. Schuch added that he has no issue with this at all because he recognizes that the Benchwarmers are a nonprofit generating funds for the district. He admitted that scholarships were not included in that discussion originally. Nick Faiella added that they gave \$6,000 in scholarships last year and raised it to \$8,000 this year. They adjust their number every year depending on fund-raising.

Mr. Moore felt it would be a good idea to add scholarships to this policy, especially at times when there are no other needs. He would not suggest to put a limit on it. Mr. Roraback asked Mr. Bugai who is eligible for the scholarships and he explained that two are academic, two are for athletes of the year and two for the Wally Camp award to the glue that holds the team together. This year, they increased it to four academic awards. As far as Title IX, the distribution varies from year to year. Mr. Faiella noted that they review the applications blindly and the scholarships are available to everyone. The Wally Camp award is nominated by the coaches.

Mrs. Dahlheimer agreed that it needs to be added, but would not think it should be limited.

*Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to add scholarships to the Advertising, Promotion and Commercial Activities policy.*

*All in favor of adding scholarships to the Advertising, Promotion and Commercial Activities policy: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Review Use of Regional District 13 Properties Policy and fee schedule**

Mrs. Neubig explained that a basketball team had asked to use the gym, but they looked at the fee and it was \$500 per occurrence, regardless of time. They thought maybe it should be broken down into tiers, i.e., \$300 for the first two hours, \$100 for every hour after. They also noted that use of the auditorium was \$1,000 and they looked at breaking that into tiers as well. Mrs. Neubig felt that the current numbers are cost-prohibitive and would propose \$500 for up to four hours and \$1,000 for up to eight hours for the auditorium. The other question that came up is that of a pecking order, with Category A including school activities, school organizations, parent groups, town government activities, approved youth organizations, civic, church and other organizations. For-profit groups would follow all of those. Organizations in category A also use school facilities at no charge.

Mrs. Neubig also noted that when they open a building on a weekend for a town organization, they do get charged if a custodian is necessary but not an energy fee. Outside organizations get charged a \$50 energy fee.

Mr. Roraback asked if it was a burden on the custodians and Mrs. Neubig felt that most groups are very good and it hasn't been a problem.

Mrs. Neubig also explained that the district charges \$250 for a two-hour block at the track and \$500 for nonresidents. She doesn't believe the track is rented out very often. Mrs. Neubig added that rental of the track and fields is limited because the district uses them so often.

Mrs. Petrella wasn't sure how she felt about an energy fee and Mrs. Dahlheimer stated she can see where it comes from but also felt it would be discouraging to the nonprofit. Dr. Schuch stated that his prior districts never tried to make money off of these things, but did not donate to groups other than school or community. Mrs. Neubig reiterated that they charge for a custodian only if the event is during hours when they are not scheduled. Dr. Schuch noted that it doesn't seem that the district has recurring users.

Mr. Moore summarized that the Policy Committee supports this idea and asked Mrs. Neubig to come up with a fee schedule.

**Review Immunizations policy**

Mrs. Keane reviewed that there have been updates to the Immunizations policy based on updated state regulations. The main difference is that there are no longer any religious exceptions to vaccinations and immunizations. For students currently enrolled in K-12, if they have a religious exemption on file as of April 28, 2021, they are grandfathered in. The only exemption offered from here out are medical exemptions, with specific guidelines and forms.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if there are current students in the district that have siblings that will be refused and Mrs. Keane confirmed that that was true. Dr. Schuch reviewed that this is per state code. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if parents have asked to have their child sent to other districts and Mrs. Keane explained that all schools have to follow this policy, both public and private. Dr. Schuch summarized that parents will basically have to home-school or move out of state. He also explained that the state compromised by allowing grandfathering those students.

Mr. Moore asked Mrs. Keane to print out the updates for tonight's board meeting so that this can hopefully be adopted tonight. Mr. Roraback wanted to see how this will be enforced in the inner cities.

Mrs. Keane also reported that she attended the Unified Sports track meet this afternoon and had a wonderful time.

**Discuss language recommendation for Purchasing Procedures policy**

Mr. Moore explained that Mr. Stone had recommended changes in the Purchasing Procedures policy for items \$5,000 and above require three quotes and use the current policy for above \$25,000 during the Finance committee meeting. The Finance Committee recommended that it be brought to the Policy Committee to do that.

Mrs. Neubig stated that the current policy does not call for a formal bid, but does call for two, preferably three, quotes at \$25,000. She has always gotten bids as she believed that was the intent. Middlefield does not require a bid or quote for anything below \$5,000. Anything in the budget for \$5,000 to \$20,000 requires two quotes and anything in the budget over \$20,000 would require a formal bid. Anything not budgeted and over \$5,000 would also require a formal bid. The threshold is higher for repairs, with estimates only being required up to \$20,000.

Mrs. Neubig explained that the district is a much larger business than Durham and Middlefield, with many expenses over \$5,000. There are often vendors who are not willing to spend the time to provide quotes. She believes that \$5,000 would be too low and would feel more comfortable with \$10,000 to \$25,000 requiring quotes and over \$25,000 requiring a formal bid, specifically for repairs. Repairs can be very expensive, but are also time sensitive. She also noted that they try to use the state bid list whenever possible as well and they do try to get quotes when possible. Mrs. Dahlheimer reminded everyone that Mrs. Neubig had been okay with it at the Finance Committee meeting and Mrs. Neubig explained that she still is, but has given it additional thought since then.

Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback agreed with Mrs. Neubig to go with \$10,000. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked when this policy was last changed and Mrs. Neubig noted that it was changed to \$25,000 in 2016. Mr. Moore asked if the committee wanted to have more discussion or bring it forward to the full board. Mrs. Neubig asked if they could add the words “if possible” if they want to set the policy at \$5,000 and Mrs. Dahlheimer would be okay with that as it gives respect to both Mrs. Neubig and the Finance Committee. Ms. Betty added that her husband, who is a plumber, would not be willing to give bids on small jobs. Mrs. Petrella reiterated that she would like to go with \$10,000. Mrs. Neubig explained that they spend more than \$5,000 quite often and it is usually for repairs.

Mr. Moore felt that there was somewhat of a consensus to go with \$10,000 and Mrs. Petrella felt that that should require three quotes, if possible. Mrs. Dahlheimer stated that if they were to go with \$10,000, she would like to see three quotes. Ms. Betty added that if they at least made three attempts to get quotes that should be taken into consideration.

Mrs. Neubig will write something up and bring it to the meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup> when Mr. Stone will be present.

**Definitions for Equity policy**

Mr. Moore explained that the definitions were created by students on the Well-Being Committee as they had been confused by the policy. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that 25 students worked on the definitions. They had also changed the definition of accessibility as well which was not included in the document.

Mrs. Dahlheimer and Mrs. Petrella would be okay with sending the definitions to the full board, but would like to see the accessibility definition prior. It was generally agreed to bring these forward tonight to the full board for adoption.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adjournment**

*Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.*

Dr. Schuch recommended the Policy Committee scheduled for next Wednesday be canceled.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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