

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Policy Committee met in Regular Session on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 4:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback

Committee members absent: Mr. Mennone

Board members present: Mrs. Petrella

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Keane, Director of Student Services and Special Education, and Mrs. Trainer, Assistant Principal, CRHS

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback.*

**Approval of Minutes - October 18, 2023**

*Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Dr. Darcy, to approve the minutes of October 18, 2023, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of October 18, 2023, as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed.*

**Review of Shipman Model Policy on Admission to the Public Schools at or Before Age Five**

Mrs. Keane explained that the only changes made to the Shipman policy were adding the district's name and the date under 1A. Dr. Schuch is an advocate for parents being able to make their decision whenever they want, but the longer they take to make that decision, the longer it will take the district. Staff may not be readily available to do assessments in the summer. They acknowledged that something will have to be done for people who move to town between May and September. Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that CAFE feels that these policies will have to change in the future.

Mrs. Keane suggested they pick just one of the assessments for now and felt that they could always change it later on. Dr. Schuch agreed as well and asked what they would want to do if a family moves into town after school has already started. He noted that his prior district had a policy that stated once a school year started, it was too late.

Mrs. Keane added that policy 5111 needs to be updated as well, changing the ages in the second and third paragraphs.

Dr. Schuch reviewed that the law has passed, so a policy that is aligned will be good to have. He felt that they will build in some language that speaks to the practicality of getting assessments done. He reiterated that they cannot be assessed too early or the assessments won't be valid. Late Spring/early Summer would be the best time for assessments. They will draft language to include extenuating circumstances.

### **Review of Nepotism Policy 4112.8**

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that changes need to be made to the policy to allow for substitutes to not be covered by the policy. The district is at a point where it's become very difficult to get substitutes. Mr. Moore asked if that would apply to a college student coming in as a substitute or a permanent sub. Mrs. Dahlheimer didn't feel it was for a permanent sub.

Dr. Schuch asked about the spirit of the policy and how the committee feels about family members of board members or district-level administrators. He asked if this was about full-time employment and possibly not just substitutes. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt this was more about substitutes. She also clarified that the policy states that board members or their families cannot be employed by the district in any way. Dr. Schuch suggested that the policy distinguish between a contractor and an employee. He added that if substitutes are in the district 31 days, they fall under the protection of the teachers' union if they are certified.

Dr. Darcy felt that this is tough in a small town and for the district's purposes. Dr. Schuch added that kids of some administrators sub, but cannot do that in the building where their parent is. Mrs. Dahlheimer considers building administrators the same as central office administrators. She had a hard time differentiating building administrators and board members for this purpose. Mr. Moore suggested that they waive the requirement due to the shortage of substitutes in the district. Dr. Darcy asked if there was a reason to limit that to just substitutes. Mrs. Keane felt it came down to evaluations and the awkwardness that arises when they are not doing a good job.

Dr. Schuch will work with Mr. Brough and bring this policy back to the committee next month.

### **Review of Fundraising 5325 & Social Media 4118.51 Policies**

Dr. Schuch reviewed that they had discussed these policies back in November and the attorneys have recommended their model policy, but that can be modified. He had specifically asked about Snap! Raise and the attorney stated that if the district has a prohibition on crowd-funding, then it doesn't matter who is doing the fundraising. Other districts have policies that distinguish the difference between general crowd-funding and peer-to-peer fundraising. Snap! Raise utilizes peer-to-peer.

Mrs. Dahlheimer was concerned about Snap! Raise because they take over 40 percent of the money raised and that is not transparent. Dr. Schuch explained that Snap! Raise is targeted at donors that have been identified by each family, using an email blast. Go Fund Me or Donors Choose are true crowd-funding that goes out to the world. The district would like to use these platforms because it is more convenient for the donors. The attorneys have said they could craft language to allow for platforms such as Snap! Raise,

but not general crowd-funding. Dr. Darcy felt that using that type of platform, but the policy should be that the platform can't take more than 20 percent or some other number. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that people could be angry with the district that they donated money to something and lost 40 percent of it. Dr. Schuch noted that every fundraising company charges a fee. He has heard from parents that if they are not allowed to use this option, it will severely limit their ability to raise funds.

Dr. Schuch explained that the support groups can essentially do whatever they want if they don't involve the children as this policy governs the learners themselves. The district's attorney feels that if a child's name or likeness in a school uniform is used, that is involving the children. Mr. Moore described the basketball team selling pink t-shirts and Dr. Schuch explained that if the money goes to charity, it is not a fundraiser. Mrs. Petrella suggested that anyone doing fundraising should have to disclose how much of the money actually goes to the project. Mr. Moore added that the governor has recently announced Go Fund Me grants and Dr. Schuch noted that they didn't promote that because it wasn't allowed under the policy.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if the intention was to make fundraising equitable across sports teams when one team can raise \$20,000, but another can't. Dr. Darcy agreed and felt that if the kids need something, the district should be paying for it and not rely on fundraising by parents. Mr. Moore felt that a lot of the fundraising is for things that they may like, but the district isn't funding. Dr. Schuch felt that the underlying challenge is whether they want the district's public persona to be that they don't welcome gifts and donations from well-meaning benefactors. Dr. Darcy clarified that she was not advocating getting rid of booster clubs, but there is a disproportionate importance placed on certain sports which leaves out 85 percent of kids in the school.

Mrs. Trainer felt that all fundraising is technically elective, for sports, field trips and music. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that by not allowing it, they encourage students and families to do more community-based volunteering and fundraising.

Dr. Schuch also heard from parents that the district does not follow the regulation in all ways because it also speaks to permission forms. The attorneys do feel that kids should fill out permission forms for things like the Durham Fair and bake sales. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that it also tracks who has volunteered and who hasn't.

Mr. Moore felt that they are basically where they were in November but they need to be sure that permission forms are signed for fundraising events, including the Durham Fair. Dr. Schuch summarized that they aren't changing the policy and Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that they can keep an eye on it as things change. She would like something to go out to all the boosters, sports teams and clubs to explain this in very specific language. Mrs. Keane felt that it has been pretty muddy and not really fair and it should be cleared up, especially for parents' groups.

### **Review of 9000 Series Policies (Bylaws of the Board)**

This item was tabled until next meeting due to time constraints.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Darcy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
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