

MINUTES
WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Committee Meeting
JANUARY 21, 2004

Meeting called to Order at 6:02 pm by Committee Chairman George Monahan
Pledge to the Flag

Committee Members Present: Chairman George Monahan, Howard Horvath,
M.Toni Paine.

Committee Members Absent: Robert Guthrie

Board Members Present: Krista Pickering, Anne Heffernan

Administrators Present:

Superintendent Paul Tortora
Assistant Neil Cavallaro

Present: Speaker from CABE, Vincent Mustaro
Ron Stancil
Robert Saley

Mr. Monahan: We are thrilled to have a guest with us this evening for the main subject of policies Mr. Vincent Mustaro invited by Superintendent Tortora he is a representative of policies from CABE

At this point I would like to turn table over to Superintendent Tortora, to start off with the first item on the Agenda Overview of existing policies.

Mr. Tortora: We are not going to refer to it but some of you now have a copy of the two books. Policy is certainly one of the most important roles of the board of education. As long back as I can remember and that is going back thirty years. We have had policy. Most of the policies in this district have been in effect year after year. Back five or six years, Treva Hackley and Superintendent Palermo contacted CABE to use their policy services. To help us go threw each and ever policy and review them. Some policies were removed, some policies were added, and others were modified. In front of you now is the set of books. Those are called the current policies. These books are kept in all schools, Board Members have copies and we have started a new procedure, where new employees are informed that we have a policy book and must sign off on it. All Unions are made aware of policies. We do this because in the past years there have been test cases where discipline has been used and the employee has stated they were not aware of the policy. It doesn't matter if they are aware of the policy. It is still policy and we are within our right to exercise our right. However this is not good practice, so we try to make everyone aware. All our policies are now on the web site. We may need some minor's revision to bring us up to date do to legalisations. This is where CABE has been a tremendous asset. Through their services. There are several policy series.

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Mr. Vincent Mustaro:

Handout 1 – Key Questions on Policy

Policy is your leadership tool that is extended to by the legislative

So that looking at policy, it is the law. What you want to see happen and what you don't want to see happen.

Handout 2 – What is Policy?

*Policy

It must be narrow enough to give clear guidance to the superintendents he/she makes decisions. It must be broad enough to leave room for him/her to use his/her own discretion in making decisions-room for him/her to maneuver as necessary in meeting the circumstance of individual cases. Only the board can adopt policies. A policy is the Board speaking.

*Bylaw

A bylaw is a rule- a rule governing the board's internal operations. Like any other rule, a bylaw specifies required actions, leaving little room for individual judgment. Making and adopting bylaws is one method the board uses to hold itself in line.

*Administrative Regulations

A regulation is a specification of required action. A regulation tells exactly what is to be done, and it usually tells who is to do it and when. It leaves little room for individual judgment. Developing and issuing regulations is the Administrator's job.

*Handout 3 – The policy development Process

1. Define/Identify the need
2. Get all the facts (Direct a Policy Analysis)
3. Discuss (Require Policy Options)

*Costs in Dollars

* Staff

*Regulations

4. Review Policy Draft/Adopt

*Rewrite

*Reject

*Adopt

5. Disseminate

6. Implement

7. Oversee

8. Review and Evaluate

*Revise

*Remove as Needed

Handout 4 – The Policymaker's Checklist

1. Preparation and Background Policy Origination
2. The first Reading/Discussion
3. Second Reading/Adoption
4. Policy Oversight

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Handout 5 – Customized Policy Service

1. Sample Policies, regulations and bylaws upon request
2. Consultant Services
3. Policy Workshops
4. Update Service
5. Connecticut Reference manual (CORE)
6. Policy Audit Service
7. Customized Policy Service:

CABE reviews existing policies
Series 0000 Mission/Goals/Objectives
Series 1000 Community Relations
Series 2000 Administration
Series 3000 Business/Non-Instruction Operations
Series 4000 Personnel
Series 5000 Students
Series 6000 Instruction
Series 7000 New Construction
Series 9000 Bylaws of the Board
Handout 6- CABE Policy Service

Policy Review Committee:

*Reads Draft

*Suggest changes

* Decides what to recommend to entire board for adoption/approval

CABE makes changes suggested by the Policy Review Committee

CABE send a clean copy back to the Superintendent or designee in charge of the project

Board of Education reviews the Committee Approved Draft:

- * Makes changes if necessary
- * Adopts the series
- * Sends material back to CABE for final printing

CABE makes changes pursuant to Board and incorporates an adoption date for the third and final draft

CABE returns the adopted series to district for inclusion in the policies, Regulations and Bylaws Manual (this is repeated for each series)

The last thing I provided for you, as a resource is a list of required policies and recommended policies. We continually, at least annually provide you with an update of what the law is requiring and what CABE is suggesting.

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The Manuel was completed in the summer of 2001. Three and half years ago. Unfortunately the assembly continues to meet and also no child left behind came along. I say unfortunately because they impact the policy book. The policy is never totally complete. That's were districts get into trouble. Because there are time limits for mandated policies. The good news is CAFE is offering a new service, where we send you updates of policies at least three times a year.

Mr. Monahan: This required policy sheet you have here has been revised four or five since you went through the Manuel 2001.

With the two forwarded packages. Our Manuel is current with respect to required policies. Now on the recommended policy, obviously you see a new law come into place and maybe required items for policy manuals and some may not be. But you're saying if you see trends where a high quantity of other Districts you would forward them as recommended. Mr. Monahan before be elected to the Board as a parent I was not aware of policies.

Superintendent: I think we are pretty well covered. We have never had a situation where we had a lack of policy or agreement between management and union to enforce a policy. We have always taken the approach that Middle and High School have student handbooks. We have tried to transfer these documents into parent friendly.

Mr. Monahan would like copies of handbooks for new board members
Assistant Cavallaro will supply them.

Mr. Stencil said new student coming into the high school receives a handbook and handbooks are handed out the first day of school.

Mr. Monahan we are the beginning stages of the new board, some are veterans and some are new. Not to knock what previous Boards did. We decided to review our existing policies. It is nice to see they we subscribe to a fairly review and update service. It is the intent of the Policy Committee and the Board as a whole to review our policy books. To see if we need to drop or add new policies.

The statement of the West Haven Board of Education Policy and Bylaws states that the Board of Ed Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to the Board as a whole for a vote, and that's how we are going to do it. When we get a list of forty-three changes all at once. I am trying to find out how often do you do this, where do we start, how do we narrow it down. Obviously the ones that are mandated are pretty straightforward, we have to change them. We just have to make sure that the changes you are making cover the requirement and vote to agree to add to the policy book.

Mrs. Pickering asked about a time line

Superintendent Tortora explained that some policies are dated.

Mrs. Paine asked if it is something that is mandate by dated. It would be one thing to have to notify parents and staff. But if it's a recommended new policy, couldn't they be done all at once, like at the beginning of the next school year.

Mr. Monahan asked if anyone had any more questions about CAFE service. Mr. Monahan Thank Mr. Mustaro.

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Next on Agenda Student Representatives:

Mr. Monahan: Chairman Carrano and I brought this to the Boards attention. We had an expressed desire to have student representation on the Board.

Mr. Monahan gave out a preliminary draft for the proposed Policy/Bylaws for Student Representatives on Board of Education.

Mr. Monahan along with the next two items on the agenda, we would resolve, vote on the policies and implement as soon as possible.

Mrs. Pickering asked who would pick the three finalists.

Mr. Monahan said it would be the school body.

Any student can submit an application to be considered, the distrait, facility and guidance, would narrow list down to five or six and then the student body would then elect the representatives.

Mrs. Paine asked that all three students be primary, because have one student be elected and then just sit there and not be able to participate and have to wait for someone to dropout or be thrown out. Maybe on a rotating basis.

Mr. Monahan agreed that three would always asked to be present,

Mrs. Paine just did not feel one should be called an alternate. The three should be equal and work on rotating basis.

Mrs. Paine asked if a junior was elected are then asked back.

Mr. Monahan said that would be left up to the administrator. But felt they should have some kind of edge coming back as a senior.

Mrs. Paine agreed and said they would still have to be elected.

Change administrator to individual administrator.

Attendance will be mandatory

Mr. Monahan it comes down to how detailed we have to be.

Mr. Monahan asked if everyone was comfortable with handing this over to CAFE to clean up. So that it can be presented to the Board for a vote.

Mr. Mustaro will take policy and make committee changes.

We will get revised copy in a couple of days.

Mr. Monahan gave out handout for upcoming topics for policy committee

Final item on agenda; Superintendent Tortora has asked for an extension from the state. But we need to get a Parent Involvement Policy approved as soon as possible.

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Superintendent Tortora said we still had more time, and recommend that every take home and read both policies, read them over. Remember they can be revised. He feels that parent involvement is going to be a big goal.

Mr. Monahan said we have to start taking pro-active choices now. Especially with No Child left behind. We need to get more parents involved. We have test vehicles that we are being measured by, and one of the ways we failed that test is by attendance. That pretty said. Before the test is given, we failed because of attendance. A teacher must inform students and parents of test and tell them it is imperative they are in attendance.

Superintendent said every home is notified. We need to see what the district is doing and do an analyst. What is working and what is not?

Mr. Monahan said we clearly have a lot of instruments, with surveys and we are looking forward to some detailed input from Mr. Horvath, who has direct experience through his occupation on parental involvement in other parts of the country and he has been involved with successes with other parts of the country. He can maybe able to give us some suggestions on how we can make some improvements here. My only question is why do we need to delay? We heard the Superintendent has reviewed the general policy and is comfortable with it. We have heard from the CAFE policy expert that it complies with the requirement.

My recommendation is that we have the policy committee explain to the Board as a whole. That we are asking that this draft be voted on and added to our policy Manuel. So we can satisfy compliance, we are on the clock already.

Mr. Horvath said he would feel remiss he does not read the draft thoroughly.

Mr. Monahan suggested the committee meet before the next Board meeting.

Superintendent Tortora said he did not want them to feel pressured.

A couple of weeks were not going to matter.

Mr. Monahan said that is wasn't pressure, that everyone already agreed that no matter what policy was put before the board. It is a policy that will be amended and revised extensively because this is a very important policy. We do want a Parental Involvement Policy that does serve the system as a whole and not just one group.

Mr. Cavallaro said he thought the committee should do this as a formal vote in public. Just to make the recommendation.

Mr. Monahan asked Mr. Horvath if he would feel more comfortable if he had a chance o read the draft. Then we will schedule a policy committee meeting before the next Board Meeting. We will discuss this one subject, and either agree or disagree to recommend it that evening. If we agree that it covers the tasks.

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Mr. Monahan asked if there were any other questions on Parental Involvement Policy. Leading up to an addition review. One last thing, since we are reviewing some future topics for up coming policy committee meetings I have some here that I asked you to review as well (handout) I have added a couple if items, one is a follow-up to Chairman Carrano suggestion on updating the hiring policy and the second was one that Mr. Horvath and I have disused that is a combining policy/academic issue considering a more stringent academic grade requirement for athlete, which would be on the CIAC allowing an F and all D's and allowing a student to be an athlete. So if you could give some thoughts to those topics. Because they will be on up coming policy committee agendas.

Chairman Monahan asked for a MOTION to adjourn
Toni Paine made MOTION to adjourn and Howard Horvath SECONDED the MOTION
Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.