

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
May 16, 2011
Policy Committee Meeting

The Meeting of the Policy Committee was held in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT 06516. The meeting was called to order by Rob Saley, Chairman of the Policy Committee at 6:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS : Rob Saley, Chairman
PRESENT Eric Murillo

COMMITTEE MEMBERS : Toni Paine
ABSENT Patrick Egolum

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE: Dorinda Borer
Cebi Waterfield

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro
Anne Druzolowski
Donna Kosiorowski

Sean Maher was unable to attend this meeting due to circumstances beyond his control. He is in San Francisco for work and was scheduled to arrive home this evening but his flight was cancelled and rescheduled. He has already notified the board that he will be unable to attend the meeting on June 6th as he will be in Europe with the Yale Glee Club on a Concert Tour.

Rob Saley requested that Donna Kosiorowski pass out information to anyone who didn't previously receive it. Our newest board member received the information tonight. Donna stated that the policies discussed at the prior meeting were:

- Our Board AED Policy
- Physical Exams for School Programs (Athletics)
- Medication Regulations
- Program Accessibility
- CABE – Delete Pediculosis or Head Lice.

Donna stated that she talked with CABE and they said we don't need to have a separate policy on Pediculosis or Head Lice it can be integrated into our communicable disease policy. We should just have a procedure on it which makes sense. Rob asked if we had one now. Donna said we have a separate policy on head lice but you really don't need it because we don't have policies on anything else. We don't have it on chicken pox or any of those illnesses. We will integrate it into our procedure for communicable illnesses. Dorinda Borer asked if there were any issues with head lice now that are more than normal. Donna responded no not that she is aware of. The policies handed out are the revised policies. For the AED Policy she gave out the policy and the procedure that you really need. The rest is primarily documentation that she has to keep.

Dorinda asked if annual training was done on the AED's and who would be trained in an elementary school. Donna said they do the American Heart Association which requires training every two years. All the principals, nurses, and coaches have to be certified. Teachers will volunteer and we have some central office staff that have been trained. We have sufficient staff available to use the AED's. Dorinda asked how many does each building have. The elementary schools have 1, Bailey and Carrigan have 2 and the high school has 5. Dorinda asked how much they cost like \$3,000. No they used to be about \$2,100.00 but the price has gone down to about \$1,500.00 she thinks. It is the maintenance of the device too. You have to change the batteries and pads every so many years. Batteries cost about \$90 and the pads \$50 approximately. Some of the devices are becoming obsolete so if you want to replace it you have to get something different.

Cebi asked if there was a scheduled testing of the devices and is there a log that has to be kept? We do ours monthly and it is primarily the maintenance department custodians that are supposed to do this. There is a log sheet in the cabinet when you enter the schools.

Rob asked the life use of the AED's. If you never use it then it is good for five years. The battery has to be replaced after five years. It depends on how many shocks you have to give and how often you use it but we have never had to replace the battery due to use.

Eric asked who oversees the maintenance workers to make sure the testing and log is kept. It is a joint effort between Donna and Mike McGrath the supervisor. They initial the log sheet and date it. This is kept in the cabinet but you have to be careful when you open the door because the alarm goes off to tell you that somebody has the AED open. Eric asked if someone is really supervising this to make sure they are being checked. Donna said there are pockets of concern where they probably are not getting checked and I have been working with Mike McGrath about correcting that. Eric asked is there a central office where a copy will be recorded. Donna said they are supposed to be submitted to her and she is responsible for maintain the devices and setting up.

Cebi asked why was the custodial staff checking the AED rather than the nursing staff. Donna said the custodians are around in the building all the time and are there in the summer where the nurses are not and we wanted to get them into the habit of checking it because if we just said check in July and August they are probably not. Cebi said it could

get missed. OK. Donna said it really is not a big deal you just open the door and if it says OK it's done. If it is not OK they know to call me.

Rob said the changes were all in bold print. Donna has not submitted any of these to him. She consulted with Mr. Mustaro on the head lice and medication regulations because there were a lot of changes made by the legislators this year. She did not specifically talk about the AED other than to ask if the entire thing needs to be in the policy book and he said it is really up to the board to decide how much you want in there.

Rob said there was some talk about flu shots. Dorinda thought she saw a new law that all the students were going to be required to have a flu shot by December 31st or they won't be able to come back into school. Donna said that is going to be really difficult to implement but yes the kids are supposed to have a flue shot yearly. It has to be within a year of when they received their last one. This will be difficult to implement. We will certainly do our best to have kids get the flu shots that they need. Donna is going to a workshop on flue litigation in a couple of weeks. We hope the local providers will help us out in terms of getting the kids vaccinated and perhaps the health department can do some clinics. If parents don't want their kids vaccinated they don't have to have it done. They can sign a waiver objecting to various vaccines. Parents may or may not do that with the flue vaccine. Donna doesn't feel it is appropriate for us to exclude kids from school because they don't have a flue shot. You have to wait and see how it is going to work when you try and implement it to find out what the kinks are going to be.

Rob asked if Donna wanted to give the board time to look it over and discuss it before approving it or adding or deleting things. Yes. It is important to look over the policy to see if you have any questions. She is not expecting anything be done tonight but the sooner we pass everything the better. There are some significant changes in the medication procedures that include paras, coaches, athletic trainers, and before and after school programs. We have a good handle on this. Donna asked if the board wanted all the definitions included in the policy. Cebi said the definitions are important and having been dealing with the Department of Health at the hospital where she is a nurse thinks it is important to include it. Donna will include it. Dorinda asked if this committee has to approve policies and then bring them to the board. Rob said yes. Neil said whatever the board decides let's run a final version by CUBE and then we can go forward. Rob agreed and said in the meantime he would like the policy looked at. Donna said what the board actually passes is the policy itself which is only the first couple of pages. A further discussion continued. Donna stated that Michelle Laubin from the Board's attorney's office wrote the information on the OCR Access to the buildings. Rob will have everything sent to CUBE to review before bringing it to the board for a vote.

Rob thanked Donna for all the information she shared with the committee.

The next item on the agenda pertained to uniforms. Rob wanted a little bit of public input if anyone would like to talk about what their views are on uniforms. Rob said we will not have a vote tonight we just want input.

Eric Murillo said we have heard from a lot of the parents and he respects Rob's opinion but to have them speak now and then at the general board meeting speak again will be redundant and we need to discuss this as a committee as to where we want to take this policy and then the public can speak to the board at a regular meeting. Eric asked how Rob wanted to approach this and asked what Rob's opinion was regarding the uniforms. Rob said originally he was definitely for them. He thought they were a good thing. But we do have a dress code and in the interim he looked at it differently because he thought we could do a better job with what we have. Not only for the people that come to school but for the people that work in school. He would still like to hear from some of the people because he did get emails over the last couple of days. He asked everyone to make it brief. He knows Forest wanted uniforms as well as Savin Rock. He is looking for discussion tonight. He doesn't think that one meeting and 15 minutes of discussion makes us want to vote; we need more input. Dorinda would like to cut it off at 15 minutes so we have an opportunity because this meeting stops at 7:00 PM. Rob said if people make it brief they will be fine.

Public Speakers

Karen Doherty, is a parent of children in Carrigan and Bailey. She is not opposed to uniforms but is opposed to the BOE funding uniforms. We are having a tough time right now and we need money spent on programs vs. children's clothing.

Lorraine Carr, 29 Lake Street said to look at the five page well researched article about no uniforms for our kids in previous minutes. What kids wear and what they feel on their bodies really affects them. She says no to BOE funding. They want books, more science and those sorts of things but no uniforms.

Rosemary O'Brien, 116 Cherry Lane stated only about 45 people responded to a poll on her blog and most of them said they were opposed to uniforms but she has no idea where those readers were coming from. They could all be from Mackrille or it could be people who just want to sound off from other countries she has no idea. She agrees with Karen that we need money spent on programs and sprucing up things. We need money spent on the children as opposed to the clothes. She wonders how you are going to force the people that don't comply. What are you going to say to the child who says my mother didn't give me a uniform? How are you going to deal with the parent; they aren't the ones right there in the school facing the teacher without a uniform. What about the people that so oh well someone else is going to pay for it I don't have to worry about paying out of my pocket for the uniforms because I don't feel my child should wear a uniform; it comes back to compliance. She doesn't want the board to fund any of it. People can enforce the dress code. If your pants are too low and should be raised higher then enforce it. I'm against uniforms.

Tracy Morrissey, 305 Country Hill Drive stated originally I thought it was not a problem to enforce the uniform code but since the topic came to light the same issues keep coming up over and over again. How is the BOE going to fund these uniforms? A lot of people think the BOE is going to fund the uniforms. The dress code is not being complied with not how are we going to have the uniforms complied with. Who will be disciplined the

parents; the child? At this time we have many other issues that need to be addressed and would like to see everyone focusing on those issues.

Steven Lopes, Principal of Washington School said he thinks the biggest concern everyone has about uniforms is that they are not affordable. He stated most of the districts that have uniforms are the poorest in the state. Bridgeport just recently passed uniforms for the three high schools as well as Hartford, New Haven and all of those areas. If a child has sensory issues then you purchase the appropriate material for the uniform. It is a polo shirt and khaki pants just purchase what is appropriate. Uniforms really do affect how students are perceived. You look at the pants and the shirt with the little monogram and it really helps with the self esteem and the bullying piece. The survey says that most parents that answered the survey was predominantly for uniforms. We really need to focus in on what we expect from the uniforms and making the children more successful.

Darcy LoPresti, 115 Bellvue Avenue is completely against uniforms; it is an extra expense. Her children have plenty of clothes and they will get dirty. Her daughter will not wear a pair of khaki pants because that is for boys. She likes to wear a skirt, dress or leggings and sneakers to school. She plays outside from school and gets dirty and I toss the leggings; I'm not tossing a \$15.00 pair of khaki pants. People at the school who don't have kids don't understand what we go though and shouldn't really have an opinion on what parents put on their children as long as it is appropriate.

Wanda Sheridan, 101 Enright Street and as an educator and parent I am for uniforms. Her daughter went to a school where there were uniforms and she approved of them. There are ways to get around the expense. When you think about the uniforms and what the West Haven School system is trying to do with bringing that connection with the community and feeling prideful about their school, I think that having a uniform will allow the children to do that; and allow them to feel as one when they go to their school. I'm for the uniforms. Forest School did a survey and most of our parents who replied were all for it as well. We are even for piloting it just to give it a try to see how it can actually work and how we can make it feasible for our parents to be able to put on a polo shirt and khaki pants.

Daryl Patikee, 119 Mohawk Drive if kids aren't involved with the school and they don't want to have the pride in their school they are not going to get the pride by wearing a uniform. Bullies are going to be bullies no matter what so I am totally against it. Kids will go out to recess at 10:00 AM or 11:00 AM and they will get dirty and have on dirty clothes all day. Track pants would be a little bit better than if you are wearing khaki pants that is the way I feel about it.

Patty Rosette, 16 Harding Avenue is opposed to the uniforms. There are so many reasons not to do uniforms especially just the sensory issue. We were just being compared to Bridgeport Schools and I don't think we are on the same level as Bridgeport Schools I don't think that is a fair assessment; even New Haven Schools. I like to think of West Haven as a little more of an upper scale type of city which I am hoping we turn into. What happened to Spirit Wear that we sell and other days of wearing special Seth

Haley or what every school you attend clothing. I know that the board is not going to pay for it. . Ultimately it will be taken out of student activity funds or from other means to get them for specific families that can't afford them. Why can't we be looking for money to obtain some other materials for schools like science, math and more smart boards and programs. There are better things to do with money and more important things to be discussing than uniforms right now. She only has to supplement her younger son's clothing because he receives hand me downs from his older brother. \$150 was for three uniforms. She bought her oldest son clothing three times this year he has grown so much so that \$150 is now \$450. She would be spending a lot more than that. Everything is going up. If you keep adding things on to our free and public education it's not so free anymore. Get better programs out there so people want to stay in West Haven. Let's discuss some better things other than a uniform and let's get some good positive things going on for our schools.

Public Session is closed. The board gave thanks to all the speakers.

Rob said we are now going to open some discussions among us and then we will carry it to the board after the committee meetings. He asked if anyone would like to discuss anything now. Eric said do you want to discuss things in committee and keep it in committee what are your plans? Rob wants to discuss it in committee and have a better discussion among he board at tonight's board meeting so he would have to add it to the agenda just to discuss it.

Dorinda would like to see some sort of resolution tonight because in all fairness to the parents it is a lingering issue and we need to give them a decision one way or the other.

Rob said then you want me to ask the chairman to add a discussion on uniforms on the agenda tonight; is that what you are asking me for? Dorinda said after we discuss it here. Cebi asked if you have to put forth whether you are proposing to adopt the policy or not? So further discussion will ensue and will there be any vote tonight or will that be put off until the next meeting? Dorinda and Rob said we could but Rob wants to keep it as a discussion. Cebi and Eric would like to get a final answer because it has been talked about for three meetings. Cebi said as a parent and a board member I think with the amount of discussion we have had the time for discussion should be done. Dorinda said we haven't discussed it everybody else has discussed it. Correct but if we are able to have a discussion about it with the full board later. Rob said we might have broached it but haven't really had a discussion on it.

Dorinda said the poll came back but might have been before the discussion on how we are going to fund it really got out there. The poll was in favor but she has not been approached by one parent that is in favor of the uniforms; it has been the reverse. It is a little contradicting; was the poll too simple.

Cebi said she has heard that many people thought the uniforms were going to be provided as part of the school board expense not the parent's expense as well as what were the guidelines for those to be provided. People approached her thinking that people on free

and reduced lunches would be getting vouchers for this. She knows that this was not the information that was put forth but that has been an assumption of many people.

Dorinda said the issue is the funding right that is the biggest issue. Neil said first of all let's talk about the poll. We tried to use information from the poll to decide whether or not to go forward. The numbers echoed pretty closely the first and second time we did the poll at Forest School. It was roughly around 80% and that is a pretty high number in favor. To have the board move forward you would craft the policy anyway you want to craft it. You might have a policy that says the BOE shall not fund this and if there becomes a problem with funding the policy becomes null and void. There are funding sources if we want to pursue them. We haven't pursued those yet either. At this point it is a little bit too late to say we will start uniforms in September because those are the kind of things that need to be put in place prior to anything happening. You may want to pick a school like Forest and target that as a pilot for the following year. Use the year to notify parents and work through the funding and start with a principal like Mr. Hunt who has been very supportive and have him come before the board periodically. Although most of the majority are for it you still have to convince those people against uniforms that it is a good thing and you can do that over time or by successfully implementing it on a small term basis.

The meeting ended at 6:45 p.m. and the Facilities Committee Meeting began immediately.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Clerk