

**Board of Education, Ellington CT
Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**

The Policy Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met virtually on Monday, August 16, 2021, at 5:15 p.m.

Attendees: Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent, Ms. Miriam Underwood, Board of Education member, Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Ms. Jenn Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Committee Members: Ms. Angie Moser, Ms. Kris Picard-Wambolt

Absent Committee Members: Ms. Liz Nord (input sent to Committee Chair prior to meeting), Ms. Kerry Socha

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Ms. Picard-Wambolt.

Agenda Items:

1. Discussion of Current Policy 1110.0 – Communications with the Public

Additional language was added to this policy due to a recent legislative change that came about as a result of the Covid pandemic. It is now allowed that the two annual required parent-teacher conferences can be fulfilled by use of telephonic, video, or other conferencing platforms. Also, an additional parent-teacher conference, in addition to the two already required, shall be conducted during periods of remote learning for more than three consecutive weeks and an additional parent-teacher conference every six months thereafter for the duration of remote learning. In response to a committee member's question as to whether or not this would require bargaining with the union, Dr. Nicol stated it can be implemented without a change in work conditions, such as during the contractual school day.

A motion was made to recommend to the full Board acceptance of revised Policy 1110.1 – Communications with the Public as presented.

1st: Ms. Moser

2nd: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. Discussion of Current Policy 4118.11 - Nondiscrimination

This policy was revised to update the legal references. No changes are necessary to the body of the policy, as it already reflects the legislative changes made.

A motion was made to recommend to the full Board acceptance of revised Policy 4118.11 – Nondiscrimination as presented.

1st: Ms. Moser

2nd: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

Vote: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. Discussion of Current Policy 4212.42 – Requirements for School Bus Drivers

This policy was revised to reflect a recent legislative change. It is now required that transportation contractors will include in their drug and alcohol testing program, pre-employment and annual query of Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. This is a relatively new, far reaching, and comprehensive national database used to screen potential and current employees.

A motion was made to recommend to the full Board acceptance of revised Policy 4212.42 – Requirements for School Bus Drivers as presented.

1st: Ms. Moser

2nd: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

Vote: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. Discussion of Current Policy 5113 - Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal

This policy was revised to reflect recent legislative changes that are in response to the Covid pandemic. The first change added language regarding remote learning. If a student is remotely engaged for not less than one half of the school day, they are excluded from the definitions of excused absence and unexcused absence. This engagement during remote learning includes remote classes, remote meetings, activities on time-logged electronic systems, and completion and submission of assignments. It was agreed among committee members that this may be difficult to monitor, and accountability may not be complete. The second change to this policy is regarding "mental health days". Students enrolled in grades K-12 can now take up to two mental health days per school year and it will be considered an excused absence. Such absence is to permit the student to attend to his/her emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school. A student is not permitted to take these mental health days during consecutive school days. If taken, these mental health days will be counted as part of, not in addition to, a student's nine allowable excused absences.

A motion was made to recommend to the full Board acceptance of revised Policy 5113 – Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal as presented.

1st: Ms. Moser

2nd: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

Vote: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5. Discussion of Current Policy 5113.2 - Truancy

This policy was revised due to the same legislative changes as the above referenced policy. Language was added stating in the calculation of the district's chronic absenteeism rate and the school chronic absenteeism rate, a student's engagement, in grades 9-12, in remote virtual learning shall be excluded if such engagement accounts for not less than one half of the school day. In addition, the calculation of chronic absenteeism rates shall exclude absence resulting from a student taking a mental health day.

A motion was made to recommend to the full Board acceptance of revised Policy 5113.2 - Truancy as presented.

1st: Ms. Moser

2nd: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

Vote: Unanimous. The motion passed.

6. Discussion of Current Policy 5131.911 - Bullying

This policy was revised to reflect legislative changes. It is now required that the Safe School Climate Committee shall include (a) at least one teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining unit representative for certified employees, (b) medical and mental health personnel assigned to such school, and (c) at the high school level, at least one student enrolled at the school. The student is to be selected by the students in a manner determined by the school principal. Dr. Nicol informed the committee, our Safe School Climate Committee has historically had union representatives as members, as well as school nurses, and at times, students, so compliance will not be a practical change.

A motion was made to recommend to the full Board acceptance of revised Policy 5131.911 – Bullying as presented.

1st: Ms. Moser

2nd: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

Vote: Unanimous. The motion passed.

7. Discussion of Current and Proposed Policy 0200 – Goals and Objectives

This policy was revised to reflect a recent legislative change. It is now required that districts include social and emotional learning within their written goals and objectives. In researching this policy Dr. Nicol obtained a sample policy from CAFE under Mission-Goals-Objectives, Policy 0200, entitled Goals for the ___ Public Schools. In comparing that sample policy with our current Policy 0200 Goals and Objectives under Mission-Goals-Objectives, it was determined the sample policy was much more comprehensive and better suited to our needs. Language was added to include the recent legislative change. We added point number seventeen, to integrate the principles and practices of social-emotional learning into the district's professional development program (and referenced the statute). Dr. Nicol informed the committee that we are already in compliance with this policy and already have this professional development in place.

A motion was made to recommend to the full Board replacement of current Policy 0200 – Goals and Objectives with CAFE sample Policy 0200 – Goals for the ___ Public Schools, retitled Goals and Objectives as amended.

1st: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

2nd: Ms. Moser

Vote: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

1st: Ms. Moser

2nd: Ms. Picard-Wambolt

Vote: Unanimous. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m. by Ms. Picard-Wambolt.

Respectfully submitted by

Kris Picard-Wambolt, Policy Committee Chair