



Minutes

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Avon Board of Education

34 Simsbury, Avon, Connecticut 06001

Via Zoom

Tuesday, January 30, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Members Present: Ms. Thej Singh, Chair; Ms. Nicole Russo; Ms. Lynn Katz; Ms. Sarah Thompson

Member(s) Absent: None

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Jess Giannini, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Roberto Medic, Assistant Superintendent

Others Present: Ms. Deb Chute, Board Chair; Mr. Christopher Campbell

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Committee Chair, Ms. Thej Singh.

II. Approval of November 28, 2023 Minutes

Ms. Lynn Katz motioned to approve the minutes of November 28, 2023 Policy meeting,

Ms. Nicole Russo seconded

The motion passed 4-0-0

I. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public.

IV. New Business-Items for Review and Discussion

A. Policy 4118.51- Employee use of District Computer Systems and

Dr. Carnemolla began by stating that this policy only has a few simple revisions which was to update some technology terms like Tik Tok and Twitter/X and technology devices like Smartwatches. The statute governs the use of computers in the schools (or any electronic device) and the notice of privacy when using our network. Ms. Katz questioned whether the paragraph in the Employee policy:

Users should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of the computer system or other electronic devices that access the computer system. Use of the computer system represents an employee's acknowledgement that the employee has read and understands this policy and any applicable regulations in their entirety, including the provisions regarding monitoring and review of computer activity.

should be also put into the Student Policy on Computer use and that discussion was tabled until the committee reviewed the Student Use of Computer policy later in the meeting.

***Ms. Russo motioned to bring revised policy 4118.51 Employee Use of District Computer Systems and Electronic Communications to the full board, as presented, for approval. Ms. Katz seconded.
Motion passed 4-0-0***

B. Policy 5112- Admission to the Public Schools at or Before the Age of Five

Dr. Carnemolla stated that this was discussed at the January Board meeting; and with the change in the statute, a new policy was needed. Dr. Carnemolla touched upon the residency issue where the Hartford Open Choice students are considered within our Avon jurisdiction, so therefore will follow the same guidelines as Avon residents entering Kindergarten.

Ms. Katz questioned if a parent of a child who is not 5 years old by September 1, 2024, and petitions for their child to be assessed for their readiness for Kindergarten, is the Principal's decision final on that assessment? What if the parent disagrees with the decision?

Dr. Carnemolla answered that 2 certified staff members will be assessing all students with the same assessment materials. The process will be fair and consistent so there will be no question or appeal process of the decision.

***Ms. Thompson made a motion to bring revised policy 5112, Admission to the Public Schools at or Before Age of 5, to the full board, as presented, for approval. Ms. Katz seconded.
Motion passed 4-0-0***

C. Policy 5131.71- Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety

Dr. Carnemolla stated that this policy is like the employee policy we did first, adding in SmartWatches as a device that a student should have no expectation of privacy on, if on our Avon network. Dr. Carnemolla discussed with Attorney Sarah Gleason about the paragraph at the end of the employees policy regarding no expectations of privacy when on the schools network, and Attorney Gleason saw no reason we could not add that verbiage to the student policy as well. Ms. Katz and Ms. Russo thought it would be a good idea to add the wording, all of the policy committee agreed.

***Ms. Russo made a motion to bring revised policy 5131.71, Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety, with the changes suggested by the committee on language at the end of the policy, to the full board, as presented, for approval. Ms. Thompson seconded.
Motion passed 4-0-0***

D. Policy 5144- Student Discipline

Dr. Carnemolla stated that the primary change to this policy is the addition of the definition of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and the possible misuse of it. There are also some revisions regarding discipline; continuing to teach, encourage and reinforce student behaviors. Dr. Carnemolla mentioned that there is a piece of the guidelines that came from the Federal level on racial discrimination, from the office of Civil Rights that ties into reaffirming the restorative practices.

Ms. Russo asked what is the general process of when you move from restorative practices to discipline and Dr. Carnemolla answered that they are not mutually

exclusive and many times there is a consequence to one's actions as well as an educational piece being taught. When appropriate, restorative practices and positive reinforcement will always be used, but in some cases, there is not choice as some offenses come with automatic expulsion (weapons possession for example), as well as sometimes the parent does not aid in the restorative practice, and the school has to move to discipline.

***Ms. Katz made a motion to bring revised policy, 5144 Student Discipline, to the full board, as presented, for approval. Ms. Russo seconded.
Motion passed 4-0-0***

E. Policy 5144.4- Recess and Play Based Learning

Dr. Carnemolla referred to the new public act on Play Based Learning, and this is what is causing the policy to be revised. Dr. Carnemolla asked if there were any questions on the policy and Ms. Katz mentioned the paragraph where it says “devoted to a physical exercise not less than 20 minutes”. She questioned about indoor recess, sometimes children just go out and talk during recess...is it mandatory that the children actually run around and be physical? Dr. Carnemolla answered no, it is not required, because yes, sometimes there is indoor recess where they play board games, etc. It is more of an *opportunity* for children to get physical exercise, they are not mandated to do the physical activity. A conversation ensued regarding reasons that a child may be ‘pulled out’ of recess. Certain exceptions may be to receive OT, PT, Speech, or a service where there is no other time to give it. Guidelines in the policy reflect the exceptions. Ms. Russo questioned if the higher grades can receive recess and Dr. Carnemolla answered that after 6th grade, for scheduling reasons, it is hard to carve out that time, but many times the flex period that 7th and 8th graders have is an opportunity for the students to go outside.

A final question posed by Ms. Thompson regarding taking recess away from the student as discipline, hoping that tactic wasn't used very often. Dr. Carnemolla assured her that it is only used if the child has done something dangerous or happened in that moment, directly before going out to recess.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to bring revised policy 5144.4 Recess and Play Based Learning to the full board, as presented, for approval. Ms. Katz seconded.

Motion passed 4-0-0

F. Policy 6210 - Parental Access to Instructional Materials

Dr. Carnemolla stated that we had to update the policy to stay in compliance with the state statute, although this has been Avon's practice anyway, so we are ahead of the game on this policy as most of our curriculum is online already.

Legislation now states that parents can request to see instructional materials. Ms. Russo asked what ‘Reasonable time after the request is made’ meant in the policy and Dr. Carnemolla answered that it was dependent on the form the material comes in (paper, electronic etc.) so getting the information to the parent could be immediate, or take some time. Ms. Singh asked if this was the same for parents requesting materials from their SPED student's teachers and Dr. Carnemolla mentioned that, yes, it refers to SPED students as well, as long as it can be produced again to show the parent, and it is not an assessment or test.

***Ms. Thompson made a motion to bring revised policy 6210 Parental Access to Instructional Materials to the full board, as presented, for approval. Ms. Katz seconded.
Motion passed 4-0-0***

VI. Future Items for Review

Ms. Singh stated that there are no items for review at this time.

VI. Adjournment

***Ms. Katz motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 pm, Ms. Russo seconded
Motion passed 4-0-0***

Minutes prepared by Christine Sardinkas, Recording Secretary
Minutes respectfully submitted by Thej Singh, Policy Committee Chair

Minutes approved by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Minutes are approved at the next Policy meeting, and any corrections to the minutes, if needed, will be made at that time.