

Minutes

Policy Committee Meeting
Waterford Board of Education
15 Rope Ferry Road
June 23, 2011

Present: Mr. Blevins, Mr. Egan, Mrs. McCarty, Ms. McLaughlin, Mr. Taglianetti

Absent: None

Staff: Mr. Belair, Superintendent; Mr. Bonillo, History Teacher, Waterford High School; Mr. Foster, French Teacher, Waterford High School; Mr. Macrino, Principal, Waterford High School; Mr. Powers, Assistant Superintendent

Guests: None

Mr. Blevins established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Motion: That the Policy Committee approves the minutes from meetings held on May 26, 2011.
Taglianetti, McLaughlin: Unanimous

The meeting began with Mr. Foster showing the committee his Facebook page. He spoke about the basic layout and features of Facebook. Mr. Foster also elaborated on his own personal policy when interacting with students and that he was going to be creating a separate page just for students. Mr. Macrino finds the “friending” of students online to be problematic from an administrator’s point of view. His main concern is things being taken out of context. Mr. Bonillo does not have any students on his Facebook page. He does not worry about what is on his page but worries about what is out of his control, i.e. what his friends could see on his other friend’s pages that may not be appropriate. Mrs. McLaughlin agreed that the use of separate pages – one for personal use and one for use with students – was a smart idea. Mrs. McCarty commented that if a social networking forum was used to communicate with students, she would like it to be for educational purposes and not just socializing with no purpose.

Mr. Taglianetti remarked that teachers communicate with students in class, via email, teacher web pages, etc. He questioned the added benefit of using social networking when there are already multiple means of communication available to students. Mr. Foster added that he has used Facebook to remind students of assignment due dates and it has been effective; students see his posts in their news feed since they are on Facebook all the time. Mr. Egan observed that teachers already have several ways they communicate assignments to students and teachers posting reminders on Facebook just contributes to students being dependent on their teacher, rather than independently seeking the information they need.

Mr. Powers handed out an article in which the Stonington Board of Education decided that their current policies adequately covered accepted conduct for social networking and did not have the need to create a separate policy. Mr. Blevins agreed with this stance. He said the BOE already has policies in place that cover communication with students; this is no different, just a different way of communication. Mr. Taglianetti questioned whether the draft policy added anything to a “code of conduct” rather than just introducing the use of social media. Mr. Egan said he would be more comfortable with the policy committee reviewing a code of conduct, which would be applicable anywhere, in any media. The policy committee will next review policies, regulations and procedures related to teacher professional codes of conduct.

Next, Mr. Powers introduced the revised field trip policy and regulations. Currently, there are just regulations and no policy, so this is something that is needed. Additionally, language has been added in the regulations to cover foreign field trips. This includes notification to the Board of Education 11 months in advance of the trip. The committee will be thinking about the need for similar notifications for other trips and will discuss these revisions in more depth at the next regular meeting.

Motion: That the Policy Committee adjourn its meeting at 5:57 p.m.
McCarty, McLaughlin: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Kathleen McCarty
Recording Secretary