

**BOE Policy Committee Minutes**  
**3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**  
**March 21, 2018**

Meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Rebekah Harriman-Stites, Dan Cruson, Lorrie Rodrigue, Abby Hill (8:00 am – 8:45 am and 9:10 am – 10:00 am), Deb Mailloux Petersen (8:00 am – 8:16 am), Elissa Gellis (8:30 am – 8:48 am), Jean Evans Davila (8:50 am – 8:58 am)

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Abby Hill, 157 Boggs Hill Road, Newtown, Connecticut. Abby is Founder and Director of the Exceptional Partner Service Dogs.

- A. Hill requested that a protocol be established for when a service dog is needed in the schools.
- R. Harriman-Stites stated that such a protocol/procedure would be part of the regulation, not the policy. Therefore when the policy is approved, the regulation can still be worked on.
- L. Rodrigue agreed and stated that she must also check with our lawyer before approving any protocols/procedures for the District as regards Service Animals.
- A. Hill emphasized that she believes it needs to be a protocol that is District-wide instead of just for a school.
- R. Harriman-Stites agreed that we must have a comprehensive, sensitive and responsible position in place for the District that supports not only students but employees with disabilities that require a Service Animal.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** R. Harriman-Stites made a motion to approve the minutes of February 21, 2018. D. Cruson seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**UNFINISHED OLD BUSINESS**

Discussion and possible action:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Follow-Up</b>
<p><b>Policy 6172.4– Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students</b> – D. Mailloux Petersen stated that, as per the Committee’s request, she has carefully reviewed CAFE’s recommended policy as edited by the Committee with the following additional edits: On Page P6172.4(c), remove the Note in the box after #4. The Sample Letter for Parents should be kept – on Page P6172.4 – Form, Then on Page 6172.4 Appendix A – delete the NOTE: in the box under the heading “School-Parent Compact”. Also in Appendix A, delete, after Parent Responsibilities, the OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS, and the rest of Appendix A and all of Appendix B. The committee members agreed with these edits and R. Harriman-Stites stated that Policy 6172.4 should go into the queue with other non-series 5000 policies waiting for review by the Board of Education.</p>	<p><b>Policy 6172.4 – Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J. McEvoy will make agreed upon edits to this policy, form and appendix, and it will replace current Newtown Policy 7-409.1 – Title I Parent Involvement.</li> <li>• The policy will go into the queue with other non-series 5000 policies waiting for review by the Board of Education.</li> </ul>

## UNFINISHED NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and possible action:

Action	Follow-Up
<p><b>Policy 5123.3 – Graduation Ceremonies (Participation) -</b> L. Rodrigue told the committee members that she checked to see if we are legally allowed to hold diplomas if school properties aren't returned and/or outstanding fees aren't paid. She quoted from the State statute, Sec. 10-221, "Said boards may charge pupils for such damaged or lost textbooks, library materials or other educational materials and may withhold grades, transcripts or report cards until the pupil pays for or returns the textbook, library book or other educational material." She told the committee that even though the word "diploma" is not written in the State statute it is part of the practice at Newtown High School to hold the diploma until materials or fees are paid. (Committee members agreed that if legally a transcript is able to be held, so would a diploma.) R. Harriman-Stites stated that this policy, with agreed upon edits, should be moved into the 5000 series queue.</p>	<p><b>• Policy 5123.3 – Graduation Ceremonies (Participation) –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This policy, with agreed upon edits, to go into the 5000 series queue with other policies waiting for review by the Board of Education</li></ul>
<p><b>Policy 5122.3 – Assignment of Former Home-Schooled Students to Classes –</b> There were no changes made to the already edited policy. The committee reviewed L. Rodrigue's edits to the regulation (from the last meeting) and agreed with them. On Page R5122.3(b) regarding the 7<sup>th</sup> bullet under "High School (continued)", L. Rodrigue told the committee members that after reviewing Policy 6146 – Graduation Requirements and Policy 6172.6 – Distance Education – Virtual/Online Courses, it was her recommendation that the 7<sup>th</sup> bullet read, "In order to graduate from Newtown High School the student must be fully enrolled for their twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade." Also R. Harriman-Stites stated that Policy 6172.6 – Distance Education – Virtual/Online Courses should be referenced in the regulation. Everyone was in agreement. R. Harriman-Stites said that this policy should be moved to the 5000 series queue.</p>	<p><b>• Policy 5122.3 – Assignment of Former Home-Schooled Students to Classes –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were no changes made to the already edited policy.</li><li>• J. McEvoy will make the agreed upon edits to the regulation and both the policy and regulation will be moved to the 5000 series queue waiting to be reviewed by the Board of Education.</li></ul>
<p><b>Policy 5123.2 – Summer Work or Credit –</b> L. Rodrigue told committee members that she and E. Gellis are looking at providing opportunities for students to receive on-line credits for courses that were failed previously. E. Gellis said that currently the NHS summer school is 4 weeks seat time and that she and L. Rodrigue have been looking into a Virtual High School, with online credit opportunities, that is 8 weeks. E. Gellis reiterated that the student handbook does not spell out a summer school policy. However, for as long as she's been there, she stated that the policy has been as follows:</p>	<p><b>• Policy 5123.2 – Summer Work or Credit –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• L. Rodrigue and E. Gellis will put together this policy and regulation, and bring them back to the committee for review.</li><li>• In addition, this Policy 5123.2 – Summer Work or Credit, once approved by the Board of Education, should also be spelled out in the NHS student handbook.</li></ul>

<p><b>Policy 5123.2 – (Continued)</b>  <i>Make up courses are for students who have taken a course and not completed it successfully. Students must have a grade of 55 or higher <u>and/or</u> an attendance record of 75% to enroll. Not all students will be eligible to attend. Credit will only be given to students who previously failed the course during the regular school year.</i></p> <p>L. Rodrigue said that she and E. Gellis would like to put together this policy and regulation and bring them back to the committee for review, and that they will reference in Policy 6172.6 – Distance Education – Virtual/Online Courses. The committee members agreed.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 5124.1 – District/School Report Cards -</b>  J. Evans Davila told the committee that this policy has been recently updated by V. Mustaro of CAFE and, although it is an optional one, she believes it is important. The first three pages P5124.1(a), (b) and (c) categorize what information our District report cards and the Profile and Performance Report shall contain (and J. Evans Davila is responsible for these). On page P5124.1(d), her suggested edits are:  In the middle of that page add (“the following”) to the end of the sentence, “The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible to ensure <b>the following:</b>  Below that sentence, delete #2 and re-number. These edits were agreed upon by the committee. This policy to be moved into the queue of 5000 series policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy 5124.1 – District/School Report Cards –</b></li> <li>• J. McEvoy to make agreed upon edits to this policy and it is to be moved into the queue of 5000 series policies waiting for review by the Board of Education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 5123 – Promotion/Acceleration/Retention –</b>  Due to the weather cancellation of their meeting, L. Rodrigue said that she was not able to review this policy and regulation with the administrators. As per the last policy meeting, L. Rodrigue will review the recommended Old Saybrook policy and on Page 5123(a) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, starting with “All students are expected to progress...”, she will make sure that this aligns with Policy 5122 - Assigning Students to a Teacher and Classes in Grades K-12. Then in the bulleted items underneath that paragraph, she will make these items fit for our District.  L. Rodrigue will then review both the edited Policy 5123 with the administrators as well as the suggested regulation chart and our current Policy 7-105.1 – Retention Procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy 5123 – Promotion/Acceleration/Retention</b></li> <li>• J. McEvoy will revise the recommended Old Saybrook policy and regulation (to change the wording from Old Saybrook to Newtown).</li> <li>• L. Rodrigue will review the suggested policy and regulation with administrators as outlined in the last policy committee meeting.</li> <li>• This policy and regulation will then be brought back to the committee for further discussion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 5124.2 – Release of Report Cards -</b>  It was reiterated that this policy is not needed. L. Rodrigue has already shared with Principals the State statute that allows them to withhold report cards, etc., if fees are not paid or books not returned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy 5124.2 – Release of Report Cards –</b></li> <li>• Although the committee again stated that this policy is not needed, it was decided that the language in this policy should be distributed to Principals for use in their student handbook. It is as follows:</li> </ul>

Release of Report Cards

Unless a specific request has been obtained from a parent to act otherwise, report cards are to be given only to the student to whom the report card belongs and not to a sibling or friend.

A non-custodial parent, upon written request to the school principal, may receive a copy of his/her child's report card unless there is a court order to the contrary.

A parent who is incarcerated is also entitled to knowledge of and access to all educational, medical or similar records maintained in the cumulative record of any minor student of such incarcerated parent except in situations (1) where such information is considered privileged as defined in C.G.S. 10-154a, (2) such incarcerated parent has been convicted of sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault, or (3) such incarcerated parent is prohibited pursuant to a court order.

Report cards, transcripts and other student records may be withheld from release to those students who have outstanding obligations with the district until such time that those obligations are met.

**Policy 6163.32 – Live Animals in the Classroom – Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs)** - L. Rodrigue shared with the committee P. Maher's (of Shipman & Goodwin) response to A. Hill's feedback on their suggested Policy 6163.32. R. Harriman-Stites stated that she feels it is important to have a procedure for Service Animals in place that will provide a framework for administrators. D. Cruson agreed that a procedure in the regulation makes sense. R. Harriman-Stites asked L. Rodrigue to draft an appropriate regulation that would include a District letter.

L. Rodrigue agreed but felt that two different letters would potentially be needed – one for students and one for staff members. The committee decided that the policy is good as revised by P. Maher and that the regulation will be reviewed at an upcoming policy meeting.

- **Policy 6163.32 – Live Animals in the Classroom – Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs)**
- The committee decided that the policy is good as revised by P. Maher and that the regulation will be reviewed at an upcoming policy meeting.

## UPDATE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

L. Rodrigue told the committee that she wants to look at the snow days issue – i.e. having digital seat time for snow days and said that C.A.B.E. is looking at it. D. Cruson said that there was a posting about South Carolina's on Facebook. L. Rodrigue said that there is information about Boston's that she can send as well. All the Superintendents were together last week and talking about it. It would be something that we would need to know about ahead of time and C. Amodio would be an important resource for setting it up – how do you sign in, etc. R. Harriman-Stites stated that she would love us to move toward that and L. Rodrigue said that she is waiting for the state to open up about it.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Abby Hill, 157 Boggs Hill Road, Newtown, Connecticut.

- A. Hill questioned why P. Maher (of Shipman & Goodwin) isn't going with Federal law in his proposed Service Animals policy for Newtown – why is he using the narrower State law definition?
- L. Rodrigue said that one of the things P. Maher discussed is that you have to follow both Federal and State law. One doesn't have to take precedence but you have to work broadly with both.
- A. Hill feels that when, as in A. Definitions #1 on Page P6163.32(a), it states "For purposes of this policy, 1) a service animal includes a *guide dog* or *assistance dog* for a blind, deaf or mobility impaired person as outlined in Conn. Gen. Stat. 46a-44...", it makes it sound like this policy only defines a service animal by that narrower state definition and it's confusing. The dogs she trains are for psychiatric service and it makes it sound like they are not included.
- L. Rodrigue said that she would discuss this with P. Maher, in this instance and other places where it states, "For purposes of this policy" as on Page 6163.32(b) in #3 Definition of "Handler".
- A. Hill also told the committee that therapy and comfort dogs are insured by their organization, as are service dogs in training, and that they should be asked for their insurance. Insurance for service dogs for staff or a student falls on the individual to provide.
- R. Harriman-Stites and the committee members thanked A. Hill for her time and assistance with this policy.

R. Harriman-Stites notified the committee members that, because the next policy meeting was scheduled for April 4, 2018 and this is a delayed opening day for professional development, the next Policy Committee meeting would be April 11, 2018 from 8:00 am – 10:00 am in Shared Meeting Room 1 of the Municipal Building.

A motion was made by R. Harriman-Stites to move Policy 6172.4 – Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students, Policy 5123.3 – Graduation Ceremonies (Participation), Policy 5122.3 – Assignment of Former Home-Schooled Students to Classes, and Policy 5124.1 – District/School Report Cards to the appropriate queue (Non 5000 series queue and 5000 series queue) with other policies waiting to move forward to the Board of Education for review. D. Cruson seconded. Motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by R. Harriman-Stites to postpone discussion/action on Policy 5123.2 – Summer Work for Credit, Policy 5123 – Promotion/Acceleration/Retention and Policy 6163.32 – Live Animals in the Classroom – Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs). D. Cruson seconded. Motion was unanimously approved.

**UNFINISHED NEW BUSINESS – DISCUSSION/ACTION POSTPONED TO A FUTURE MEETING**

<b>Policy 5123.2 – Summer Work for Credit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be reviewed by committee as discussed</li></ul>
<b>Policy 5123 – Promotion/Acceleration/Retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be reviewed by committee as discussed</li></ul>
<b>Policy 6163.32 – Live Animals in the Classroom – Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be reviewed by committee as discussed</li></ul>

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by R. Harriman-Stites and seconded by D. Cruson. All were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Submitted: Rebekah Harriman-Stites, Policy Committee Chair