

**Stafford Board of Education
Board Policy Committee Meeting
Stafford Elementary School Conference Room
Wednesday, December 20 2023, 4:30 p.m.**

Present: Mr. Aaron Hoffman, Board Chairperson
Eileen Bartlett, Committee Member
Ms. Sara Kelley, Committee Member
Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools

Also Present: Mrs. Jennifer Biedrzycki

1. Call to Order

The committee meeting was called to order at 4:30pm.

2. Review and Possible Revision of Board Policies and Regulations

The committee members reviewed the following Board Policies:

1010 Non-Discrimination

Changes were made to align with legal changes. The policy now provides for equal access to limited public forums for the Boy Scouts and other groups as required by law. The definition of sexual orientation and the addition of domestic violence victims as a protected class was added. The policy further outlines the protected classes whom can bring complaints of discrimination or harassment to the Title IX Coordinator and the reporting procedures to do so. Updates will be made where the policy references 'identify appropriate personnel' and web addresses to align with the district's information. References to Vice Chair will be changed to Secretary to align with the district's Board of Education structure.

4118.11/4218.11 Non-Discrimination (Personnel)

This policy was changed to include the information regarding discrimination on the basis of erased criminal history. Mandatory staff reporting for student incidents was updated. Complaint procedures for Superintendent and Board Members were clarified. Examples of types of discrimination and harassment were outlined.

5145.4 Non-Discrimination (Students)

As in *BOE Policy 1010 Non-Discrimination*, changes were made to align with legal changes. The policy now provides for equal access to limited public forums for the Boy Scouts and other groups as required by law. The definition of sexual orientation and the addition of domestic violence victims as a protected class was added. The policy further outlines the protected classes whom can bring complaints of discrimination or harassment to the Title IX Coordinator and the reporting procedures to do so. In addition, mandatory staff reporting for student incidents and remedial action thereof were outlined. Examples of types of discrimination and harassment were included.

4111 Recruitment and Selection

The policy will be revisited at a later date.

4118 Child Abuse or Sexual Assault Reporting

The wording regarding technical high school systems was updated to 'Technical Education and Career System'. The gender-neutral term 'the child' replaced specific pronouns in the policy. Clarification was made on the distribution of policy, guidelines and posting of Careline information to include annual electronic notification. General statute updates were made to the response and reporting procedures.

5131.911 Bullying

The definition of bullying was updated and is anticipated to be updated again in the next year. Discrimination and harassment definitions were updated. The addition of 'alternate school program' was added to the sections that referred to 'school' only.

5131.912 Safe School Climate Plan

The changes in this policy directly relate to the changes in *BOE Policy 5131.911 Bullying*. Definitions of discrimination, emotional intelligence, harassment, and positive school climate were updated. Section XI, Improving School Climate, which outlines the steps a particular school will undergo to improve the quality of the school climate will be updated as the steps are developed. It was also noted that Form B has been completely replaced and Form C now includes reminders to administration regarding the information that is required to be submitted.

5141.4 Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Response Policy and Reporting Procedure

This policy was updated to replace specific personnel names with titles and associated positions to reduce the need for regular updates in this area. Ms. Sara Kelley suggested streamlining the chart associated with these positions by combining the role and the school in which the administrator oversees.

5145.7 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

This policy was updated to include the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in all areas of the policy.

5143 Health Assessment Screenings

This policy was added to the agenda at the request of the Board of Education members. Mr. Aaron Hoffman suggested that clarifying language be added to reassure parents and the school community that non-emergency invasive physical examinations and screenings were not going to be conducted by the district. Mr. Moccio explained the federal requirements of the policy and referenced the policy clarification that was sent out on 10-31-2023. Mr. Moccio stated that in researching the policy, his colleagues are of the belief that the policy language was put in place federally due to schools performing strip searches. Mr. Hoffman made a motion to open the meeting to public discussion, seconded by Ms. Kelley. The motion was approved by Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley, and Eileen Bartlett, the motion carried.

Public Comment

Laura Lybarger, Stafford, expressed concern over the wording in VII. A. of the policy that states 'from time to time, require students to undergo addition non-emergency, invasive physical examinations(s)/screening(s)'.

Alissa Criniti, Stafford, questioned whether prohibiting strip searches was the intent of the policy. She stated that she believed the policy referred to school-based healthcare. Ms. Criniti also expressed concern over the wording in VII. A. of the policy that states 'from time to time, require students to undergo addition non-emergency, invasive physical examinations(s)/screening(s)'. She cited her own research that notification would need to occur at least annually and enacted with consultation with parents. She expressed that she would prefer an opt-in policy for increased protection of parents and the district. She explained that she was also concerned about parents not reading notices and that the policy needs to be clearer.

Mr. Hoffman stated that he believes the policy should be an opt-in and/or the language of the policy be clarified. The suggested language was 'In addition to the screenings listed above, the District may, with parental consent and prior

written authorization, require students to undergo additional non-emergency, invasive physical examination(s)/screening(s).'

Alice Lawrence, Stafford, asked why there could not just be a statement that the district does not do non-emergency, invasive physical examination(s)/screening(s). Mr. Moccio explained that the district needs to comply federal regulations and Mr. Hoffman reiterated that the district does not want to be out of federal compliance.

3. Review of New Board Policies and Regulations

4110 Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

Mr. Moccio reviewed the sample Shipman and Goodwin policy regarding increasing educator diversity. He explained that, while to district already participates in efforts to increase diversity, the Connecticut legislature now requires board of education to develop and implement a written plan to address increasing educator diversity.

5120 Admission to the Public Schools at or Before Age Five

This policy, effective July 1, 2024, complies with Connecticut's General Statutes that Stafford Public Schools shall be open to resident children five years of age and over who reach age five on or before the first day of September of any school year. This policy allows for parents to submit a written request for early admission and assessment of the child's development.

4. Public Comment

Laura Lybarger, Stafford requested that the full policy drafts be made available to the public prior to the meeting for review. Mr. Moccio stated this would be addressed.

5. Adjournment

Mr. Hoffman made a motion to adjourn, Eileen Bartlett seconded the motion. Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley and Eileen Bartlett all approved the motion. The committee meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Synnott
Recording Secretary