

Concord School District
Board of Education Communications and Policy Committee

Date: September 16, 2020

Committee members present: Gina Cannon, *Chair*; Tom Croteau. Jim Richards was appointed a member of the committee for this meeting.

Board member present: Maureen Redmond-Scura

Administration: Kathleen Murphy, *Interim Superintendent*, Karen Fischer-Anderson, *Student Safety Compliance Officer*, Jack Dunn, *Business Administrator*

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Gina Cannon at 5:39 pm.

Karen Fischer-Anderson reviewed the action plan developed to address the recommendations made in the Perkins Report.

Specifically, four areas were reviewed and discussed. The focus of the discussion was on sections III.(A), III.(B), V.(A)(8), and V.(A)(9) of the plan. With regard to recommendation III (A), one member raised concern over a report of sexual harassment being made to a building Principal and no further action being taken by the Principal. It was explained that failure to follow up on a report of sexual harassment could result in disciplinary action being taken against an employee up to and including termination, and that a warning to that effect was contained in Policy #415.

Discussion surrounding III.(B) involved potential bias by a Principal or Assistant Principal when investigating an allegation within their own school. One member recommended principals and assistant principals from other schools (not the school conducting the investigation) be used to conduct investigations to avoid any issues of bias. The Board was assured that the Title IX Coordinator, in consultation with the Superintendent, would ensure that any assigned investigator was trained, independent and unbiased, and that the Title IX Coordinator would be available for oversight and assistance.

Discussion on V.(A)(8) centered on the need to define “infrequent occasions” regarding the length of employment where a student was hired by a teacher or other school employee. If employment exceeded “infrequent occasions,” it was suggested that schools develop a requirement that the employment relationship be officially known and documented by the school’s front office.

With regard to recommendation V.(A)(9), a committee member concurred that infrequent, non-intimate hugs may be appropriate under certain circumstances, but suggested adding language to make educators aware of the potential appearance issue, and to exercise discretion when one-on-one with a student and exchanging a celebratory or consoling hug.

The Superintendent suggested sharing the issues discussed in the four areas above with Principals and/or the administrative council, to seek their feedback and suggestions on how to implement Employee–student employment reporting requirements.

The second item discussed was Board Policy #249 Records Retention and Schedule. The committee recommended that the full Board be updated as needed when timelines changed based on new legislation.

The Committee voted 3-0 to recommend to the full Board Policy #249 Records Retention and Schedule in its entirety for approval (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Mr. Richards).

The third agenda item was Policy #161 Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Employment. Discussion ensued by committee members. A question was posed why the number and type of suspect classes was inconsistent between those regarding students and those regarding employees. Ms. Fischer-Anderson agreed to verify the applicable state and federal laws, adjust the suspect classes as necessary, and include changes in the document forwarded to the Board for a first reading on October 5.

The Committee voted 3-0 to recommend to the full Board Policy #161 for a first reading (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Cannon).

A motion was made to adjourn.

Committee members voted 3-0 to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Cannon).

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Cannon, *Chair*

Linden Jackett, *Recorder*