Date: Monday, November 14, 2016

Committee members present: Jennifer Patterson, Chair, Alana Kimball, Maureen Redmond-Scura, Tom Croteau

Other Board member present: Clint Cogswell

Administration: Terri Forsten, Superintendent; Donna Palley, Assistant Superintendent

Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. The agenda for the meeting included a discussion of eight policies.

1. Concord School District Policy 133, Minutes. Superintendent Forsten noted that this policy, last revised in 2001, needs revision to add language on electronic meeting minutes, given new legislation. She suggested changes to the final paragraph, to include changing ‘144 hours’ to ‘five days,’ and adding the following sentence at the end of the current policy: Electronic records may be provided, if the requestor so requests and if such records can be delivered electronically.

Ms. Patterson noted that the last statutory reference listed does not look right to her. Superintendent Forsten noted that it is incorrect – it should be RSA 91-4I rather than AAI. Also, the other referenced statutes should be written with capital ‘I’ rather than ‘1’. Maureen Redmond-Scura asked why less time is provided for making minutes available for non-public meetings versus public meetings. Superintendent Forsten responded that the public would have the opportunity to be present for public meetings, but not for those which are non-public.

Several committee members commented on the importance of using clear practices for taking minutes of the motions first to go into non-public session, and then to come out of non-public, and also to seal minutes. Superintendent Forsten noted that the New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) has a template that can be used for non-public meetings.

The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend Policy 133 to the full Board for a first reading, with revisions as noted (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Tom Croteau).

2. Policy 711, Student Transportation

Superintendent Forsten presented a recommendation to adopt the NHSBA Student Transportation Services policy in place of the District’s current Student Transportation policy. This is based on an amendment to RSA 194-B:2, V, that allows
charter school pupils access to traditional school district bus and transportation services. School districts are not required to expend additional resources or alter bus routes in order to provide this accommodation.

It was noted that the District’s transportation policy provides greater access than the RSA. Members wondered about costs associated with these changes, and also about private school aspects of the law, as well as the District’s current practice with regard to transporting students to private schools. Superintendent Forsten indicated that she would gather additional information for the Committee.

Ms. Patterson suggested that this policy revision be put on hold, pending additional information from Transportation Director Terry Crotty and an opportunity for Superintendent Forsten to more fully integrate the current policy with the NHSBA version. Mr. Croteau suggested that the proposed section pertaining to conflict resolution also be reviewed. He noted that the NHSBA policy suggests consecutive appeals to the Superintendent, which seems confusing, and also references a Transportation Committee, while the Concord School Board has no such committee. Mr. Croteau also suggested reviewing how the NHSBA policy is organized, as it does not seem to be well-structured.

3. New Policy: Video and Audio Surveillance on School Property

Superintendent Forsten presented a new policy for consideration, as the District does not currently have a policy aimed at surveillance. At this time there is only limited use of video and audio surveillance in the District. There are cameras outside the schools at main entryways, which are used to monitor individuals seeking to enter the school. A camera was used at Mill Brook School during a time when there was unauthorized entry into the building. Superintendent Forsten has heard from some in the District who are interested in adding cameras inside the schools. Several members indicated that they would like to have discussion in the school communities, in the broader Concord community, and within the School Board about video/audio surveillance. Superintendent Forsten noted that there was discussion of the potential need for electronic surveillance following school safety evaluations. In addition, some administrators have indicated that they feel they could follow up more effectively on issues in their buildings with the help of cameras in hallways, cafeteria, or outside bathrooms. The Concord Police Department had mentioned that they would find investigations quicker to resolve with cameras.

Ms. Patterson indicated that she would be comfortable going forward with the sections regarding special education and the information on the second page of the proposed policy, but felt there should be additional conversations before going further with the other aspects.

This proposed policy will be tabled at this point. Superintendent Forsten will collect additional information and arrange for additional discussion of this issue.

4. Policy 462, Criminal Records Checks
Changes in state law regarding criminal records checks for prospective school employees have resulted in a need to revise this policy. The new law requires the state police to report convictions for any crime, including felonies and misdemeanors. Superintendent Forsten recommended that the Committee consider replacing the District policy with the NHSBA Policy GBCD, Background Investigations and Criminal Records Check.

Committee members suggested several changes to the proposed policy. It was recommended that the words ‘his/her designee’ be removed from the first sentence. It was also suggested that the paragraph on paying for fingerprinting be omitted. It was suggested that District Policy 890, Designated Volunteer, be referenced instead of the NHSBA Designated Volunteer policy.

Superintendent Forsten noted that she would use discretion in terms of nominating individuals with previous misdemeanor convictions, weighing such factors as the nature of the crime, as well as the amount of time that has passed since conviction. She would seek guidance from the Department of Education and/or school attorneys as appropriate.

Ms. Patterson noted the third paragraph from the bottom on the third page of the policy, which suggests that an applicant may be denied a final offer based on convictions and that the determination be made by the Board. She wondered why the decision would be made by the Board rather than the Superintendent, and requested additional information about whether there is a legal reason for this. Several members remarked that fewer eyes on criminal records made sense to them. Ms. Patterson questioned the use of the phrase ‘which it finds unsatisfactory’ in the last full paragraph on page three of the policy, which seems to lack clarity about the standard or criteria used to make the employment decision.

Superintendent Forsten will make revisions to the proposed policy based on the discussion.

The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend Policy 462 to the full Board for a first reading, with changes as noted (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

5. Policy 642, Opening Exercises and Patriotic Exercises

Superintendent Forsten recommended revisions to Policy 642, Opening Exercises as a result of recent legislation requiring school districts to engage in certain patriotic exercises. She recommended continuing to use the first sentence of Policy 642. A title change was recommended. The revised RSA requires that exercise of a patriotic nature for Memorial Day and Veterans Day include a discussion of the words, meaning, and history of the Pledge of Allegiance and the Star Spangled Banner. In addition, federal legislation requires the commemoration of Constitution Day. Ms. Redmond-Scura recommended that the policy be clearer in not requiring that the District observation of this day take place on September 17, as this might occur on a weekend. Superintendent Forsten will make this adjustment.
The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend this policy to the full Board for a first reading, with changes as noted (moved by Clint Cogswell, seconded by Ms. Redmond-Scura).


This is a new, optional policy, recommended by the NHSBA in response to a recent amendment to RSA 193:1-c, which now includes charter school students in the ‘equal access’ to school district programs statute.

The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend this policy to the full Board for a first reading (moved by Mr. Cogswell, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

7. Policy 683 Parental involvement in Education and NHSBA Policy KB Title I Family and Community Engagement

Superintendent Forsten noted that the NHSBA sample policy KB is related to the requirements of the new Every Student Succeeds Act, the replacement for the No Child Left Behind Act. Ms. Patterson suggested that the Board not discard Policy 683, as it may be helpful for non-Title I schools, but perhaps adopt the new one as well. Ms. Redmond-Scura pointed out several typing errors in the second and third paragraphs of the NHSBA draft. Committee members raised questions about the parental policy development aspect of the NHSBA draft. It appears that parents are expected to be involved in the development of the family engagement policy. Superintendent Forsten will review this further and return to the Committee with additional information at a later date.

8. Policy 875, Relations with Police Authorities

This is a new recommended, rather than required, policy from NHSBA. The District does not currently have a policy on this topic, although there is a Memorandum of Understanding developed and implemented annually with the Concord Police Department. The NHSBA recommends this policy for districts with resource officers in the schools; Concord High School has a resource officer. Ms. Redmond-Scura noted that the policy states clearly that the District will work with the police, and it might be especially important to have this policy in place, to cover periods of time when there is a gap between signed MOUs.

The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend this policy to the full Board for a first reading (moved by Ms. Redmond-Scura, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

The Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting (moved by Ms. Redmond-Scura, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, Chair
Donna Palley, Recorder