Concord School District
Board of Education
Communications and Policy Committee

Date: April 5, 2017

Committee members present: Tom Croteau, acting Chair; Alana Kimball, Maureen Redmond-Scura

Other Board member present: Barbara Higgins

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

Tom Croteau, filling in for Jennifer Patterson who was absent, called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. The agenda for this meeting included a review of nine policies:

- Policy 150 School Board Electronic Communication
- Policy 160 Non-Discrimination
- Policy 170 Board Member Development
- Policy 171 Board Member Conflict of Interest
- Policy 180 Reports and Research
- Policy 210 School District Calendar
- Policy 211.1 Exemption from Immunization
- Policy 211.2 Foreign Study Abroad
- Policy 694 Field Trips

The Committee heard comments unrelated to the agenda from three individuals:

Adrienne Evans is the parent of two children in the District, both with disabilities. She came to the meeting to offer support on special education issues. She noted that there were a few issues that have come up in the last couple of months that have made her think that the Board would benefit from information from parents, especially those who themselves are on advisory boards and have experience that would benefit the Board. She asked that a meeting be scheduled to discuss special education policy. Parents are looking for a vehicle for sharing information about special education; for example, ways for the District to save money. Ms. Evans specifically asked for information about the restraint and seclusion policy.

Mr. Croteau noted that those specific policies were not on the agenda, but that parents can contact Superintendent Forsten or Clint Cogswell to discuss this. Superintendent Forsten noted that she is always interested in another point of view or additional information, and encouraged parents to speak directly with her. She indicated that the administration is supportive of a parent support group that meets
regularly in the District. This group has an upcoming meeting, and during that meeting there will be a conversation about restraint and seclusion. Superintendent Forsten indicated that this parent support group meeting is next Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at Mill Brook School and is open to anyone.

Barb Higgins noted that perhaps a group on special education could be formed, similar to the steering committee on early childhood. Superintendent Forsten indicated that this suggestion could go to the full Board for discussion.

**Penny Duffy** is the parent of two students with disabilities. She noted that her children are getting a good education in Concord, and she is always concerned about different policies and how they may impact her children. She has thought about the possibility of an advisory board. She wants to make sure that her children, and all children, are safe at school. She offered to help the Board in any way she can, to share her expertise.

**Jennifer Pineo** is fairly new to the District and has two children with special education needs, one who attends Christa McAuliffe School and one at Rundlett Middle School. She noted that her children’s teams are amazing. She watched her son on a field trip in Boston, moving around with the other students, not even needing his paraprofessional, and felt that this was a really good thing. She said she wants to partner with the District and help, especially with how to message a policy to parents. She recently completed work on a grant where she focused on this. She noted that she and the other parents would like to be an asset to the District, to help in any way they can.

Maureen Redmond-Scura noted that action on these topics might happen faster and easier at another level, perhaps below the Board level. Mr. Croteau said he does not remember having this type of request before, but promised that the issue will move to the full Board based on these discussions and notes.

**Policy 150: School Board Electronic Communication**

Superintendent Forsten presented two versions of this policy for consideration: the District’s Policy 150 and a corresponding model policy from the New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA). The Board’s policy was last revised in 2009, and offers guidance from RSA 91-A on expectations for electronic communications. Members agreed to add the following paragraph from the NHSBA policy to the Board’s policy:

*If an e-mail is originated by a Board member, is communicated to a quorum of the Board, and discusses official District business, the e-mail will be considered a public document for the purposes of the Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A. As such, the contents of the email communication will be publicly disclosed and included in the minutes of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.*

Three legal references from the NHSBA document will also be added to the policy.

**Policy 160: Non-Discrimination**

Committee members reviewed the Board’s policy as well as a corresponding policy from the NHSBA. Several revisions were suggested, which was last revised in 2002. Members
suggested changing the word sex to gender, and adding economic status to the first sentence which describes the possible basis of discrimination. In addition, it was recommended that the following paragraph from the NHSBA policy be added to the first paragraph of the Board policy:

This policy of non-discrimination is applicable to all persons employed or served by the District. Any complaints or alleged infractions of the policy, law or applicable regulations will be processed through the grievance procedure. This policy implements PL 94-142, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI or VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the laws of New Hampshire pertaining to non-discrimination.

Superintendent Forsten suggested several revisions to the grievance process described in the Board’s policy, including changing the time required for the grievant to submit the complaint if the individual is not satisfied with the remedy proposed by the initial recipient of the grievance, as follows:

a. Building Supervisor: change from 10 days to five

c. Communications Committee of the Board: change from 10 days to 20

The address for the regional Office of Civil Rights was updated.

**Policy 170: Board Member Development**

Superintendent Forsten noted that the Board’s policy was updated in 2001 and is very similar to the corresponding NHSBA model policy. Members questioned whether the Board currently has a policy regarding new Board member orientation. Superintendent Forsten noted that she would check and bring this information forward at the May meeting.

Mr. Croteau suggested referencing the Board’s annual retreat in the section that describes examples of activities and services appropriate for implementing the policy.

**Policy 171: Conflict of Interest**

Superintendent Forsten noted that this policy was last revised in 2009, and requires Board members to complete a questionnaire annually about relatives employed by the District.

Alana Kimball suggested that this sentence from the NHSBA model policy be added to the end of the second paragraph of the Board’s policy:

*Additionally, Board members should refrain from engaging in conduct or actions that give the appearance of a conflict of interest, embarrass the Board, or personally embarrass another Board member.*

**Policy 180: Reports and Research**

Superintendent Forsten noted that this Board policy was adopted in 1984, and that NHSBA does not have a similar policy. She asked the members whether the Board needs to maintain this policy. Committee members agreed that this policy should be removed.
Policy 210: School District Calendar

The Board’s policy was adopted in 1984. Superintendent Forsten recommended to the members that the policy be revised to include the following language from the NHSBA’s model policy:

The school calendar will be developed by the Superintendent and approved by the Board. Any exceptions or revisions to the calendar must be approved in advance by the Board.

The Superintendent shall ensure that the calendar conforms to the number of actual days or hours of instruction and employment as required by law, Board policy, and staff contracts.

As soon as possible, the calendar will be shared with the Concord Regional Technical Center sending school districts.

Ms. Kimball suggested that the December deadline be kept in the policy. Members agreed with the language recommended, including keeping the December date.

Policy 211.1 Exemptions from Immunization

Superintendent Forsten noted that this policy was last revised in 1984, and that the NHSBA includes a policy on this topic in their student section. This topic is addressed in the Board’s Health Procedures Manual, Policy 531. Superintendent Forsten recommended that the committee consider deleting Policy 211.1, adding the legal references from the NHSBA model policy to Policy 531.

Mr. Croteau requested that Superintendent Forsten provide Committee members with additional information before they act on this policy, related to the fourth paragraph of the NHSBA model policy:

In the event of an outbreak, students who have been exempted from immunization requirements will be excluded from school for a period of time, to be established after consultation with the NH Dept. of Health & Human Services, if such students are considered to be at risk for the disease that they have not been immunized against.

Superintendent Forsten will gather additional information about this issue, and will bring the answers forward to members at the May committee meeting.

Policy 211.2: Foreign Study Abroad / Policy 694: Field Trips

This policy was adopted in 1984, and the NHSBA does not have a corresponding policy. Board Policy 694 addresses field trips, and Superintendent Forsten recommended that the Committee consider revising this policy to include language suggested by the NHSBA in its policy related to field trips. She noted that District students participate in some overnight, out-of-state and international field trips. Superintendent Forsten also noted that the Superintendent and Principals currently approve field trips rather than the Board, as in the NHSBA policy. Mr. Croteau noted that it makes sense for permission to be delegated to administrators rather than the Board, but suggested that the Board be informed about international trips.
Committee members agreed to propose that Policy 211.2 be eliminated and Policy 694 be brought forward with revisions based on the model NHSBA policy.

Committee members discussed funding for field trips, and asked about students who may not be able to afford the cost of trips. It was noted that the schools’ Parent Teacher Organizations often provide support for field trips.

The Committee voted 3-0 to recommend Policies 150, 160, 170, 171, 210, 211.1 and 694 to the full Board for consideration, with changes as noted, and that Policies 180 and 211.2 be eliminated (moved by Ms. Redmond-Scura, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Additional information about Policy 211.1, Exemptions from Immunizations, as well as information about a policy regarding new Board member orientation, will be brought to the next meeting.

The Committee will meet again on May 10. Ms. Redmond-Scura asked that policy regarding expectations for athletic coaches be discussed. Superintendent Forsten will research NHIAA rules and regulations on this topic. Ms. Higgins also noted that coaching contracts list expectations. At its next meeting, members will also review and revise additional policies within Section 200: General School Administration. Mr. Croteau asked that documents to be reviewed be distributed a week or so in advance of the meeting, which will help to make discussions more complete.

The Committee voted 3-0 to adjourn the meeting (moved by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Redmond-Scura).

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Croteau, Acting Committee Chair
Donna Palley, Recorder