Concord School District
Board of Education
Communications Committee Minutes

Date: June 17, 2015

Committee members present: Jennifer Patterson Chair, Tom Croteau
Committee members not present: Jim Richards, Kass Ardinger
Other Board member(s) present:
Administration: Superintendent Chris Rath, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Director of Facilities and Planning Matt Cashman

Jennifer Patterson convened the meeting at 5:34 p.m. There were four agenda items: reconcile Policy #135 Rules of Order and Policy #121 Elective Board Offices, review Policy #422.2 Disability Insurance, review Policy #633 Community Education and review a first draft of a new policy regarding students’ food service accounts.

Superintendent Rath pointed out the inconsistency between Policy #121 and Policy #135 with respect to the role of the secretary in the absence of the president and vice president. The suggestion was made to indicate that the secretary will take charge in the absence of the President and Vice President.

The Committee voted 2-0 to bring forward this policy to the July Board meeting for a first reading (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Tom Croteau).

Superintendent Rath pointed out that Policy #422.2 is an old policy that may have been adopted when there was no language in the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) or in the individual contracts of unaffiliated staff regarding disability insurance. The existing CBAs have language about disability insurance as do the individual contracts of unaffiliated staff. The recommendation was made to remove this policy.

The Committee voted 2-0 to recommend to the full Board that Policy #422.2 be deleted (moved by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Patterson).

Director of Facilities and Planning Matt Cashman recommended that Policy #633 Community Education read that the Director of Community Education will establish the annual student rates, discounts, and instructor salaries. In addition, the policy would remove the line “the tuition for adults 65 years or older will be no more than one-half the published rate.”

The Committee voted 2-0 to accept this change and bring it forward to the full Board (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Croteau).
Mr. Dunn reviewed the Food Service Charging Policy. Ms. Patterson recommended the Committee do a brief overview of the proposed new policy but wait to hold a full discussion until more members of the committee can be present.

Mr. Dunn reviewed the purpose of the policy, noting that the policy regarding student accounts should be age appropriate. Ms. Patterson recommended that the middle school and high school policies be combined as they are similar. The elementary sections may focus more on the parent, to increase the awareness of parent responsibility for low balances.

The policy is designed to educate staff, students and parents about district procedures for notifying parents and students about accounts that are low or in the negative. A series of notices are sent as student accounts reach $15, -$10 and -$15 balances. Even with the notices sent now, the district is facing outstanding balances that amount to a little over $12,000. The problem is significantly greater at the elementary level. Mr. Dunn is reviewing the manner in which student cards are swiped, to alert the cooks to low balances in a timelier manner. The administration is also looking at ways to make it easy to have parents put money on accounts.

Currently when there are balances at the end of the year and there has been no response by parents/guardians, the district sends certified letters that the balance due will be referred to small claims court. Under this proposed policy the administration is suggesting other possible responses, many of which are used in other districts. Ms. Patterson noted that the topic merits further discussion, and since the problem is greater at the elementary school, it may not make sense to focus the actions so much at the high school through actions such as withholding diplomas or excluding students from graduation activities. Mr. Croteau mentioned that he’d rather the district go the small claims court route instead of exercising some of the nine suggestions. Everyone agreed that when the policy is finalized, it is important to publicize it widely.

Superintendent Rath suggested setting up a table for parents to pay on overdue accounts at some of the spring events that bring so many parents to the school. Also, the practice of having families sign up for the program at Back to School nights in the fall should continue. This may give the staff the opportunity to explain the program in person, especially to families which may have had overdue accounts in the past.

The Committee voted 2-0 (motioned by Tom Croteau, seconded by Jennifer Patterson) to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, Chair
Matt Cashman, Recorder