Concord School District
Communications Committee Minutes

School Board Committee: Communications
Date: June 5, 2013
Committee members present: Jennifer Patterson, Chair, Kass Ardinger, Clint Cogswell (appointed), Tom Croteau (appointed)
Committee members absent: Bill Glahn, Tara Reardon
Administrators present: Chris Rath, Jack Dunn, Larry Prince

Committee Chair Jennifer Patterson convened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. and appointed Clint Cogswell and Tom Croteau to serve on the committee in the absence of two committee members. Ms. Patterson introduced the policies to be reviewed.

Superintendent Rath described the first policy, “Policy #561, Sargent Memorial Essay Contest.” Business Administrator Jack Dunn reviewed the new Treasury Department rules for the purchase of savings bonds, which are now available only online and would require that the District create an account, that the families create a separate account, and that the families also create sub-account for each child. Superintendent Rath recommended that the policy be revised to eliminate language that the Sargent Memorial Essay award be given in the form of a savings bond.

The Committee voted 4-0 (Mr. Cogswell motioned, Tom Croteau seconded) to recommend to the full Board that it adopt the changes to the policy as presented, to eliminate the requirement that the Sargent Memorial Essay award be in the form of a savings bond.

The policy with proposed revisions will come before the full Board for a first reading in July.

Superintendent Rath asked Director of Human Resources Larry Prince to discuss Policy #411 Physical Examinations – Employees. The Committee discussed several proposed changes to this policy, and decided to refer the policy back to administration for legal advice to ensure that any changes adhere to state law.

Superintendent Rath then discussed Concord School District Policy #511.1 Elementary Enrollment Areas, noting that with the completion of the three new elementary schools, all District schools are now handicapped-accessible. The clause in this policy related to elementary school placement for students requiring a handicapped-accessible facility, and the administrative procedures to implement that clause, is no longer needed.

The Committee voted 4-0 (Mr. Cogswell motioned, Kass Ardinger seconded) to recommend to the full Board that it adopt the following changes to the policy: eliminate part 2; make the entire policy one paragraph; add the phrase “and approved by the Superintendent” after “A written request is made ...”; eliminate the “Administrative Procedures to Implement Board Policy #511.1” addendum to Policy #511.1.
The proposed revised policy will come before the full Board for a first reading in July.

Superintendent Rath then discussed Concord School District Policy #Policy 511 Non Resident Student Admission. The Committee discussed this policy in detail and decided to send it back to the administration for further revision and legal consultation. Superintendent Rath asked if she can represent to several families who would like to make the request that their children stay in District schools on a tuition basis if they move out of Concord, that it is the Board’s intent to move in this direction. Ms. Patterson said the Committee believes that to be the case.

Superintendent Rath described the draft Social Media – Concord School District Staff policy and its basis and implications. The Committee discussed a number of privacy and liability issues related to staff use of social media to communicate with students. The discussion included the possible appearance of impropriety, how to determine what are inappropriate interactions, and applying related (circuit) case law.

In general, the committee noted that use of social media is pervasive and potentially valuable for educational purposes. A policy regulating its use should convey how important the Board thinks it is for staff to use social media tools in a positive way, and remind them to be mindful about appropriate behavior and take steps to make sure that communication among staff and students is reasonable, transparent, professional, and educational.

Ms. Patterson said that while it would be the intent of the Board to encourage staff to use district-sponsored social media for educational purposes, and while noting that it would be impossible to put every detail of such use on paper, the policy should include examples of situations in which staff would need to use caution.

Superintendent Rath suggested that a social media policy will be helpful to guide administrators in situations where there is some question whether the use of social media is above board, professional, or educationally-related. She also suggested intensive training for faculty and staff should be implemented when a social media policy is adopted.

Ms. Patterson noted that it would be a good idea to get more input on how staff currently use social media. Superintendent Rath will invite both students and staff to the next Committee meeting to discuss how they’re using social media now, and use this feedback, and relevant legal advice, to further revise the draft policy. Mr. Cogswell emphasized that because social media is the future of education, it can’t be regulated too tightly.

The Committee voted to adjourn (motioned by Ms. Ardinger, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

The Committee adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, Chair
Chris Rath, Recorder