

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 2, 2018
5:00 PM
501 Kings Highway East
Superintendent's Conference Room

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Review of Policy committee Calendar for 2018
- III. Approval of December 5, 2017 Minutes
- IV. Discussion of 1311.1/1311.2 Political Activities of School Employees in School/On
School Property
- V. Future Items
 - a. Booster Clubs
 - b. Board of Education Handbook
 - c. High School Graduation Requirements
- VI. Open Discussion/Public Comment
- VII. Adjournment

All meetings will be held at 501 Kings Highway East, Superintendent's Conference Room
Unless otherwise noted.

Memo to: Policy Committee, Colleen Deasy, Mike Cummings
From: Jennifer Maxon Kennelly
Date: December 15, 2017
Re: 2018 Policy Committee Dates

The schedule below will have a 5:00 start time. Extra meetings have been added in April and May, for purposes of achieving a June 5th vote AT THE LATEST for moving the Graduation Requirements Policy on to the full board for a first reading. If we achieve it more quickly, meetings could be cancelled:

January 2

January 30

February 6

February 27

March 6

March 27

April 3

April 24

May 1

May 15

May 29

June 5

June 19

Monday, August 27

September 4

September 18

October 2

October 16

November 5

December 4

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 5, 2017
4:30 PM
501 Kings Highway East
Superintendent's Conference Room

Minutes

Call to Order 4:35 PM

Policy Committee Chair Vote

- Jennifer Maxon Kennelly elected policy committee chair 2-0

Review of Policy committee Calendar for 2018

- General discussion around changing meetings from Mondays to Tuesdays
- No objections to dates proposed

Approval of November 20, 2017 Minutes

- Approved 1-0-1

Jeff Peterson arrived at the meeting 5:00 PM

Discussion of Future Items: High School Graduation Requirements

- Jennifer Maxon Kennelly would like the committee to address this issue in conjunction with Michael Cummings in early 2018.

Discussion of 1311.1/1311.2 Political Activities of School Employees in School/On School Property

- Jennifer Maxon Kennelly provided historical background on the two policies, including the initial reasoning behind the creation of the policy, and the committee's

thought processes behind creating one policy pertaining to staff members specifically and one policy pertaining to the general public.

- The Committee read through both policies line by line to assure understanding of the current state of both drafts.

Vote of Adjournment 6:30 PM

P1311.1(a)

Community Relations Political Activities of School Employees

District employees shall be entitled to full rights of citizenship, and no political activities of any employee or the lack thereof shall be grounds for any discipline or discrimination with respect to the employment of such employee providing such activities do not interfere with the performance of the employee's duties or the District's business.

Performance of Civic Duties by Employees

Employees should perform their civic duties commensurate with democratic ideals. These duties may include:

1. Voting and taking an interest in current social, political, and economic issues.
2. Exercising democratic rights and responsibilities shared with other citizens. These rights and privileges may include:
 - A. Electioneering for candidates.
 - B. Accepting positions in political campaigns.
 - C. Holding an office in a political party organization.
 - D. Serving as a delegate to political party conventions

Individual Responsibility in Participating in Political Functions

- A. Employees engaging in political activities shall not:
 1. Engage in political activities on school premises during school hours or at school events.
 2. Involve their school, school property, and/or students in personal political campaigns.
 3. Solicit, receive, collect, handle, disburse or account for assessments, contributions or other political funds, organize, sell tickets to, promote a candidate, solicit votes in support of or opposition to a candidate, circulate petitions, display political pictures, badges, stickers or buttons on District property during assigned hours of employment.
 4. Distribute literature within schools or on school buses, including but not limited to electronic mail, supporting one or more candidates, nor shall campaign posters be displayed at or within the schools. Campaign material shall be used solely for educational purposes.
 5. Poll their students to determine how their parents are voting on any issue, and shall not attempt to indoctrinate students with personal, political, or social philosophy. Any discussions during break time shall be confined to an area out of the hearing distance of students.
- B. Employee's attendance at, or participation at, political or union activities during work time

shall not take place without prior written approval of the administration.

Political Materials and/or Engagement as Part of the Instructional Program

- A. Teachers may use political materials as part of the instructional program, provided the material is germane to the instructional objectives of the course. Any presentation of political materials, or issues, or expression of views, however, must be balanced and fair.
- B. Teachers shall be responsible for providing students with the opportunity to investigate various sides of the topics presented in their courses, particularly in relation to controversial subjects, within such limits as may be imposed by relevance to the course, the maturity level and intellectual ability of the students, and the time available.
- C. Teachers shall permit freedom of expression on those topics that are matters of opinion so that students may weigh alternative views and make up their own minds. Students shall be encouraged to examine, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the information available to them before drawing conclusions in order to develop as fully as possible their capacity for rational judgment.
- B.D. Teachers shall strive to promote tolerance for the opinions of others and respect for the right of all individuals to hold and express differing opinions.
- C.E. A teacher may express his/her opinions in regard to political, social and religious values or issues provided that the total presentation is essentially balanced and fair. He/she shall not use professional interaction with students to further his/her own political aims or views or those of any other individual or group.

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The following situations are exempt from the prohibitions of this policy:

- The discussion and study of politics and political issues, when such discussion and study are appropriate to classroom studies, such as history, civics, current events, and political science.
- The conduct of student elections and campaigning connected therewith.

D.• The conduct of professional staff member representative elections.

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Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to impose a burden on the constitutionally protected speech of a staff member or student.

Problems concerning the political activity of an employee shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee who shall follow-up and take appropriate action.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.

7-421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.

10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception.

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Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property

1. Political Candidates/Issues

Debate or Forum: If a class or school-sponsored group plans a political debate or forum during the school day, the Principal/teacher/sponsor shall ensure that all candidates for the same public office or who have differing opinions on a political issue are given equal opportunity to participate.

Appearances: Elected politicians and political candidates are not allowed to appear at a school unless they are invited to visit or speak to a class or other school-related activity during school hours. However, they are entitled to the same rights of all citizens to visit the schools. The requirements for debates or forums are applicable and other candidates for the same public office should be invited to visit at the same time or be provided an equivalent opportunity.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude or prevent incumbent elected public officials from appearances on District property upon the invitation of the Superintendent, the Superintendent's designee or Principal provided that it is within their official capacity and not a campaign activity.

2. School Group Participation in Political Events

School groups may not participate in appearances that create an undue amount of interference with the regular school program or that cause an excessive amount of students' absences for rehearsal or preparation.

3. Use or Distribution of Political Materials During School Hours or on School Grounds

- a. **Interschool Mail:** Any interschool or intraschool mail system may not be used to distribute any political materials to schools. A regular newsletter of an employee organization that is normally distributed by the District's/school's mail system will not be considered political material if it simply contains news of a political nature taken by the organization. ~~However, a publication from, or newsletter primarily containing news or discussion about, any political action committee is considered political material and may not be distributed.~~
- b. **Political Materials:** Any distribution of political materials, except as part of the instructional program or student government, or political activity during working hours (including e-mail messages) is prohibited within school or on school buses, except as allowed under this policy.
- c. **Student Elections:** Students may post or distribute student-government election materials in an appropriate time, place, and manner, as determined by the Principal,

so as to avoid any disruption to the learning environment.

- (cf. 1140 – Distribution of Materials by Students)
- (cf. 1311.1 – Political Activities of School Employees)
- (cf. 1330/3515 – Community Use of School Facilities)
- (cf. 3543.13 – Mail and Delivery)
- (cf. 4118.21 – Academic Freedom)
- (cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)
- (cf. 6153.2 – Student Participation in Election Process)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

- 7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.
- 7-421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.
- 9-369b Explanatory text relating to local questions.
- 10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception.
- 10-239 Use of school facilities for other purposes
- 31-51q Liability of employer for discipline or discharge of employee on account of employee's exercise of certain constitutional rights.
- Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 395 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)
- Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81)
- Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. ss 4071-4074