

New Milford Board of Education
Policy Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
May 3, 2022
Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center

NEW MILFORD, CT

2022 MAY 4 P 3:30

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Present:	Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach, Board Chairperson Mrs. Tammy McInerney Mrs. Leslie Sarich Mr. Keith A. Swanhall Jr.
Absent:	Mrs. Olga I. Rella, Chairperson
Also Present:	Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Ms. Rebecca Adams, Human Resources Director Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations Mr. Jeffrey Turner, Technology Director Mr. Raymond Manka, New Milford High School Principal Ms. Megan Dwyer, New Milford High School Assistant Principal

1.	Call to Order The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Policy Sub-Committee was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Mrs. Faulenbach, acting as Chair in the absence of Mrs. Rella.	Call to Order
2.	Public Comment There was none.	Public Comment
3.	Discussion and Possible Action A. Policy for Approval: 1. 5121.2 Eligibility for Honor Rolls - Mrs. Faulenbach asked for comments and said this policy will automatically go back to the full Board for final approval. - Mrs. McInerney said she is glad to see the alignment between the two schools. She said she had a separate question about the SMS certificates. The one for Honors has different wording from the others and she would like to see them be consistent. - Mrs. Faulenbach clarified that the wording would be a protocol issue, not a policy one.	Discussion and Possible Action A. Policy for Approval: 1. 5121.2 Eligibility for Honor Rolls

	B. Policies for Second Review: • Mrs. Faulenbach said these policies are for second review before going back to the full Board. 1. 3440 Inventories • Ms. DiCorpo said they followed up with the auditors regarding the suggested higher threshold amount and have confirmed that the recommendation is for it to be \$500. They looked at a higher amount but that would have taken many items out of inventory. She said they have also determined that a better internal inventory system is needed since three different processes are used now. They will be looking into a more comprehensive reporting mechanism going forward. • Mrs. McInerney said that she assumes the Town has policies on this too and asked if we are aligned with them. • Mr. Giovannone said this is driven by insurance and we are under the same provider with the Town. • Mrs. Faulenbach said we also share the auditors with the Town. 2. 3450 Monies in School Buildings • Ms. DiCorpo said it was recommended last month by the auditors to strike the phrase “and even then no more than a few dollars should be kept”. • Mrs. McInerney said she is glad to hear that since it is not specific. She asked if all schools have safes or lock boxes and who makes the deposits. • Mr. Giovannone said they do and it is typically secretaries who make the deposits. All employees have bonding protection under the general insurance policy. 3. 3451 Petty Cash Funds • Ms. DiCorpo said this accurately reflects current practice.	B. Policies for Second Review: 1. 3440 Inventories 2. 3450 Monies in School Buildings 3. 3451 Petty Cash Funds
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	• Ms. Faulenbach said she appreciates the specificity of the threshold but asked if it has ever caused issues in the past. • Ms. DiCorpo said it has not. C. Policies for First Review: • Mrs. Faulenbach referenced the commentary from legal counsel. 1. 3453 School Activity Funds • Ms. DiCorpo said the auditors are fine with the suggested revisions and also suggested folding policy 3453.1 language into this policy and combining them into one under this number. • Mrs. Faulenbach asked why drivers-ed is referenced since we do not offer it. • Mr. Giovannone said it is offered as an example only. • Mrs. McNerney asked if the designated treasurer refers to staff. Ms. DiCorpo said it does, specifically to the advisors. • Mrs. McNerney referenced #5 which says an annual report for all accounts must be submitted to the Board. She does not remember seeing one. • Mr. Giovannone said he has not reported on this to the Board during his tenure and it would not be easy to do since it is tracked outside of the Munis system. • Mrs. Faulenbach suggested we look to see how other districts handle this review since they are all cleared through the audit anyways. • Mrs. McNerney agreed and said she didn't want to create busy work, so if that is the case perhaps "must" should be changed to "may" to be clear about expectations. 2. 3453.1 Unexpended Class Funds Mrs. McNerney moved to bring policies 3453 School Activity Funds and 3453.1 Unexpended Class Funds to the full Board for first review. Motion seconded by Mrs. Sarich.	C. Policies for First Review: 1. 3453 School Activity Funds 2. 3453.1 Unexpended Class Funds Motion made and passed unanimously to bring policies 3453 School Activity Funds and 3453.1 Unexpended Class Funds to the full Board for first review.
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	Motion passed unanimously.	
4.	Item of Information A. Regulation for Review: 1. 3453 School Activity Funds • Mrs. Faulenbach said this is an item of information for the Board.	Item of Information A. Regulation for Review: 1. 3453 School Activity Funds
5.	Discussion A. Policy Review Update: 1. 5132 Dress and Grooming • Ms. Hollander, Mr. Manka and Ms. Dwyer presented their findings to the committee. The presentation is attached to these minutes. • Ms. Hollander said the school-based advisory group's goal is to provide thoughtful feedback for the Board's consideration of any dress code policy changes. • Ms. Adams said CAFE also offers several sample policies around dress code. • Mrs. Faulenbach said she was pleased to see the collaborative nature of this review but expressed concerns about how any changes might impact student handbooks. • Mrs. McInerney said she was pleased to see all stakeholders considered and the inclusion of current trends and gender considerations. She asked what next steps should be for any policy edits to be considered. • Ms. DiCorpo said this is a Board decision that will not realistically be completed within a few weeks. She said handbooks can be amended if needed. It is more important to be thorough. • Mrs. Faulenbach said it will be equally important to stay in front of the message and explain the process and changes to staff and the community. This is a collaborative work in progress and it will be important to get it right. She said she was pleased to see the restorative aspect added.	Discussion A. Policy Review Update: 1. 5132 Dress and Grooming

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	Ms. Adams said it will also be important to be consistent with current and future practices.	
6.	Public Comment There was none.	Public Comment
7.	Adjourn Mrs. McInerney moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. seconded by Mrs. Sarich and passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Wendy Faulenbach, Chairperson
New Milford Board of Education

School-Based Advisory Group Dress and Grooming Policy 5132



Presentation to the New Milford Board of Education Policy Committee
May 3, 2022

Background:

The Assistant Superintendent and the Principal of New Milford High School was asked to form a workgroup to discuss the district's current dress code policy and gain insight and comments from stakeholder groups.

The feedback gathered would be shared with the Policy Committee for consideration as they review NMPS Policy 5132 for possible revision.

The last revision of NMPS Policy 5132 was in 2001.

Our Work

1. Identify purpose of the group
2. Create a work plan
3. Review current NMPS policy 5132
4. Review existing policies (DRG and SWC)
5. Conduct a “+/-” record and share results
6. Gain stakeholder feedback: results
7. Identify and communicate emergent themes
8. Share findings with the Policy subcommittee

Committee and Stakeholder Participation

A small working group was formed comprised of parents, students, teachers and administrators.

Stakeholders input was expanded to include feedback from student and faculty focus groups.

A total of 16 individuals contributed and participated in this effort.

Purpose of a Dress Code

- The goals of existing dress codes is to promote a safe, disciplined school environment, to prevent interference with schoolwork and discipline.
- Many Connecticut school districts have enacted dress codes. Within certain limits such codes are enforceable. The provisions of the code must promote legitimate educational interests. These interests include the need to avoid disruption of the educational process, student safety or maintenance of the physical plant. In addition to a valid reason for dress codes, the code must be enforceable and be fairly applied.

Guiding Our Review

As we reviewed the dress code policies we used the following headings to gather data for comparison:

- Hat
- Outerwear
- Accessories
- Language
- Current fashion trends
- Health and Safety
- Sports

Comparison with Our DRG and Area Districts

5. side-by-side comparison of our district policy to other districts

School	Hats	Shoes	Outerwear	Blouse: midriff/strap	Inappropriate language	Health & Safety	Accessories	Sport Inequity
Bethel	N	Y	Y	Y/Y	Y	Y	N	N
Brookfield	N	Y	N	N/N	Y	Y	N	N
Joel Barlow	N	...	N	N/N	...	Y	N	N
Masuk	N	Y	Y	...	Y	Y	Y	N
New Fairfield	Y (IF GANG RELATED)	Y	Y (IF GANG RELATED)	Y/Y	Y	--	Y	... (gym)
New Milford	Y	Y	Y	Y/Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Newtown	N	Y	N	Y/N		Y	Y	N
Pomperaug	Y	Y	Y	Y/Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Stratford	Y	Y	Y	Y/Y	Y	Y	N	N
Weston	N	...	N	N/N	...	Y	N	N

Our Analysis

Pluses

- Policies included a clear purpose
- Details were included to explain or clarify the specific items addressed.
- Policies stated the interventions to address student who violate the dress code
- Statements to address language or symbols that were inappropriate or sexual in nature.
- Acknowledges students' freedom of expression or religious beliefs
- Policies addressed exceptions such as medical, special events or other

Deltas

- Most policies reviewed were gender specific
- Need to address headwear (hats and hoods) in a way that supports safety rather than an all or nothing.
- Consideration of current fashion trends - example - cut out shoulders.
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Stakeholder Feedback

Representation

Students 6-12

Teachers

Administrators

Total number - 150 individuals

Themes from our Conversations

Stakeholders (teachers and students)

- were aware that there is a dress code for NMHS but many students said that they only knew parts of it and didn't understand all of it
- believed that the sections such as headwear (5132.1b) should be reviewed.
- believed that some type of dress code should exist in schools.
- believed that there should be some standards of what is worn to school.
- believed that the section on accessories (5132.1g) should be reviewed and removed.
- expressed that the trends and popular stores make it difficult to find clothes that meet the dress code guidelines
- believed that the current dress code affects female and male students differently.
- stated that the current dress code is not consistently enforced or effective.
- felt that females were subjected to "dress coding" more than their peers.

Our Findings

- Our district policy was similar to others that were reviewed.
- Inequities with attire (male/female)
- Current trends in clothing styles are not taken into consideration and are not addressed equitably
 - Midriff, Strap, and Shoulder exposure
- Accessories do not address current styles
- Shoe safety should be clarified
- Consideration of outer garments and hoods including baseball style hats
- Adding a section about education and *process* for “dress coding” for students and staff in an issue needs to be addressed regarding a potential violation
- Adding a restorative component to 5132(3) to address infractions

Considerations for the Policy Committee ~ Dress Code Revision

Policy Implementation - Education for Students and Faculty

- Parent Responsibility
- Staff Responsibility
- Student Responsibility
- Enforcement

Articulated attired that addresses the minimum including:

- Heading covering
- Undergarment coverage
- Shoes
- Expected coverage on the body
- Any restrictions
- Sensitivity to religious, moral discrimination to civil rights

Next Steps

Review findings and recommendations as you review our current policy for possible revision.

CABE Policy 5132

Questions



