

**Suffield Board of Education  
Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
February 26, 2018 - 5:00 pm  
Central Office Conference Room**

Attendees: Board members: Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, Debra Dudack, Michael Sepko, Lori D'Ostuni, and Kendra Wiesel  
District Staff: Karen Berasi, Superintendent; Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Roxanne Pangallo, Spaulding Principal; and Karen Carpenter Snow, McAlister Principal

**I. Call to Order: 5:08 pm**

**II. Policies for Review and Discussion:**

**Policy #5123 - Promotion/Acceleration/Retention:** This policy was referred to the Policy Subcommittee for review by the Board of Education after parents brought forth concerns about not having input into whether their children could be retained in a particular grade for another year. Ms. Carpenter Snow, Dr. Pangallo, Ms. Berasi and Mr. Hendrickson provided input as to how situations are currently handled in the district. Typically, parents are encouraged to voice their concerns to their teachers first before going to administrators. Once a concern is raised, administrators will meet with teachers, consider grades and other available student data, utilize retention scales in some cases, and assess the potential impact on a child's social-emotional health. Retention decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Retention is rare, but does happen if district officials deem it to be in the best interests of students. Often they will look to put additional supports in place for the student to progress to the next level. Some parents who are not pleased with the district's decision not to retain their child have chosen to exercise their right to place their child in private school to repeat a grade and then move them back to public school the following year. Sometimes the district will move to retain a child. If that happens, parents are alerted to the consideration by March. It was noted that repeating a grade does not always address or fix the problem. Board members asked whether the district has a policy-mandated regulation in place to help parents better understand the process of how such decisions are made. There is no regulation. Discussion moved to other district policies and it was noted that some include more descriptive detail in the actual policy about the consideration process, as opposed to utilizing a separate regulation. As discussion wound down, the subcommittee recommended members do additional research and come back with suggested language to incorporate information about the consideration process into the actual policy, thus avoiding a need for a separate regulation. Susan Mercik Davis volunteered to lead the effort and plans to report back to the subcommittee at a future meeting.

**Policy #4117.6 - Exit Interviews:** This policy was referred to the Policy Subcommittee for further review by the Board of Education after members asked questions relative to the wording of the policy. The superintendent explained the current process for doing exit interviews, which include a letter sent to all exiting staff from the district's HR specialist

which encourages them to interview with either Karen Berasi or Brian Hendrickson. Subcommittee members discussed the language and debated whether to shorten the policy to leave the specifics of implementation up to the Superintendent. Ultimately, it was decided to keep the language as it was originally presented. The policy will be referred back to the Board for further consideration and action.

**Review of Policy #5144 - Student Discipline:** The subcommittee reviewed the addition on a new sentence added into the policy based on changes to state law. Members discussed the amended language, which refers to education requirements for expelled students. The subcommittee recommended sending the amended policy to the full Board for a 30 day read.

**Review of 9000 Series - Bylaws of the Board:** The subcommittee discussed adding a new bylaw, #9125 - The Use of Legal Counsel. Members reviewed language suggested by Debra Dudack which follows the recommended policy from CABE. Members agreed to send the draft policy to the full Board for a 30 day read.

Members also discussed plans to revise some technology policies that are in need of updating. They also discussed the need to review the policy addressing the hiring of administrators, which was referred to the subcommittee by the Board.

### **III. Adjournment**

The subcommittee meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.