

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held June 29, 2022, at Central High School, 1 Lincoln Boulevard, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 7:17 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon and, Albert Benejan. Board member Joe Sokolovic was present

Supt. Michael J. Testani was present.

Mr. Benejan moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 2, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on the revised district field trip policy.

Supt. Testani said this was discussed at the last meeting and the current draft incorporates that discussion. He said a provision has been added about trips sponsored by an outside organization. Such trips must be specifically identified as being organized by the outside organization.

The superintendent noted additional language around the approvals needed and the time limits.

There was a discussion of out-of-state trips that occur within the same day. The superintendent said the proposal was to have overnight field trips go to the Teaching & Learning Committee, and then the full board, prior to collecting any

money. The same provisions would apply to trips out of the country.

Supt. Testani said he is very leery of foreign trips because only a small percentage of students are able to participate. There was a discussion of how foreign trips should be defined.

The superintendent noted the provision on travel insurance. He asked whether it should be made mandatory. He suggested it should be required on permission slips. Mr. Sokolovic noted some people have different risk tolerances.

There was a discussion of whether trips to amusement parks and water parks should be allowed. The superintendent said in the past there were 8th grade trips to Holiday Hill, which involves some social-emotional learning. He said he could check with counsel if there are additional liability concerns with such trips.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said he could inquire whether the Fairfield County group of superintendents and CAFE if they have prohibitions against amusement parks. He said he did not see the harm in a trip that was considered celebratory and fun.

Mr. Sokolovic said if teachers go on a trip sponsored by an outside organization it will appear to be connected to the schools. The superintendent said the VIP organization takes students on college trips. Mr. Sokolovic said he worried about the appearance of something being a school-sponsored trip.

Supt. Testani said for a recent trip to Germany the superintendent in Monroe said the trip was organized by a

teacher, who was not allowed to use school equipment such copiers. Mr. Weldon suggested that teachers organizing an outside trip must inform their immediate supervisor prior to initiating the solicitation process.

The superintendent said he can reach out to Atty. Eric Marshall of the CEA, who would have an interest in protecting his people. He said the new field trip policy, once ratified, should be sent out to all district personnel.

Supt. Testani suggested returning to the matter with the committee in the first week in August and then at the first board meeting of the new school year.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested a provision requiring adherence to state and local health protocols.

Mr. Benejan moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

*Approved by the committee on January 19, 2023*