

BOARD OF EDUCATION

City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD cont.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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Superintendent of Schools

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"Changing Futures and Achieving Excellence Together"

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CHRIS TAYLOR

Revised 6-4-2021

Bridgeport, Connecticut

June 4, 2021

Board Members:

A meeting of the Governance Committee of the Board of Education will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday, June 07, 2021, commencing at 5:15 PM. A link to view the meeting will be made available to the public through <https://www.bridgeportedu.net/stream>.

Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes – March 1, 2021
2. Discussion and Possible Referral for Board Approval: Remote Board Member Participation in In-Person Board and Committee Meetings
3. Discussion and Possible Referral for Board Approval: Revised District Magnet Policy
4. Discussion Regarding Policy Related to Board -Staff Communication

Joseph J. Lombard
Secretary
Board of Education

Governance Committee Members:

John R. Weldon (Chair)
Joseph J. Lombard
Joseph Sokolovic
Michael J. Testani (Staff)

Monday, March 1, 2021

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held March 1, 2021, by video conference call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m.

Committee members present were Chair John Weldon, Joe Sokolovic, and Joseph Lombard. Board members Sybil Allen and Albert Benejan joined the meeting subsequently as noted.

Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

Mr. Sokolovic moved approval of the committee's minutes of the meeting of February 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard and approved by a 2-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon and Sokolovic. Mr. Lombard abstained.

Mr. Lombard moved to hear item 3 prior to Item number 2 . The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was a review of district magnet school policies

Mr. Sokolovic said magnet policies were changed about two years ago and he said he submitted to the item to the agenda to see how the policies were impacting the schools.

Supt. Testani said the focus for tonight was elementary schools, not high schools. He said the entrance requirements for Central Magnet are dated and discussions

are ongoing.

The superintendent noted the magnet school principals were in attendance and Francine Carbone of High Horizons would make the initial presentation.

Ms. Carbone said the changes in 2018 loosened the entrance requirements and the continuous enrollment criteria for magnet schools. She said there used to be a rubric based on the whole child for entrance criteria. She said SRBI and special education numbers have increased since the change in policies. She said this has stretched things since the magnet schools received less funding and it has also increased stress for students, staff, and administration.

Mr. Sokolovic said the past policy revision was the result of compromise. He said in his mind the magnet schools were functioning as a quasi-gifted-and-talented program and he feared that would be lost in the loosening of the criteria. Ms. Carbone said that was the case, but the true definition of magnet was to draw in students with specific interests. She said it had become harder to lead the students to a level of enrichment and acceleration.

In response to a question, Ms. Carbone said she did not believe a lot of students were being screened out under the old policies.

In response to a question, Ms. Carbone said she believed a revision to the current policy was needed. She said a rubric based on the whole child, not just grades, should be used for the upper grades. Mr. Sokolovic said he agreed.

Dr. Victor Black, executive director of magnet schools, said there was a consensus among the principals that the change

in the entrance requirements has resulted for more struggles in progress of students. He said the differentiation requires more time, along with the higher SRBI numbers, to serve all kids.

Dr. Luis Planas, principal of Multicultural Magnet School, said he was in agreement, particularly on the amount of time spent bridging gaps. Terese Maguire, principal of Park City Magnet, said a lot of quality time is being spent on the developing the habits of mind for a magnet school student such as time management and attention to detail.

Mr. Weldon noted when he went to High Horizons Magnet some decades ago he was out of his element, but he was able to get through it and it was hard. He said it is unfortunate to put some children under pressure when maybe they should not have been there in the first place.

Lindsay Davis, principal of Classical Studies Magnet Academy, said entrance criteria would ensure that the students and the families are ready for the rigor and the pace that magnet schools provide.

Supt. Testani said he believed the change in policies does not do the students a lot of good if they have to struggle. He said some of the current generation of students may not always have the necessary resiliency. He said we really want to create an atmosphere of enrichment for students that want to excel.

Ms. Allen joined the meeting.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested the administration and staff get together and put forward a recommendation to the committee.

Mr. Sokolovic said in the discussions a few years ago there were allegations of exclusion. He said a revision should include kids being where it best fits their needs. He said if less interventions are needed at magnet schools, they can be redirected to schools where they are more needed, and it would be best for all the schools.

Supt. Testani said he believed the administration could bring forward something for the committee's meeting next month, so parents understand going into next school year what the expectations are. He said this would not impact families who have applied for the lottery closing March 12th. Dr. Black said recruitment season kicks off for schools in July and parents should be made aware of any changes.

Mr. Sokolovic said personally he would like to see more academic standards and rigor built into the policy. He said the retention policy for magnet schools was watered down as well quite a bit. He said the entrance criteria and requirements to stay in the program should be aligned with one another. He noted coordination was needed with Central Magnet as the feeder school from the elementary magnets.

Dr. Black said sometimes students who have great memory and can memorize content struggle with performance tasks, so the criteria should focus on a blend of grades and a performance-based assessment.

Mr. Benejan joined the meeting.

Supt. Testani said the sibling policy should be looked at as well. He said it is convenient for parents to have children in the same school, however, we have to look at individual children when evaluating criteria. He said an automatic

sibling entry was unfair to the process.

Ms. Carbone said the sibling policy right now is basically an automatic entrance for students in Grades K to 3. She said she believed there had been more sibling applications in later grades than under the previous policy.

Dr. Black said it would be best to address the sibling and the magnet policy simultaneously.

The next agenda item was on remote participation by board members in meetings. Mr. Weldon said he circulated a draft policy for the board members.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested it be made clearer that a chair who has an emergency should be allowed to participate remotely, but not to serve as chair of the meeting. He said he believed the chair should be able to appoint a substitute chair for a meeting or via another method such as seniority.

Mr. Benejan said he agreed with Mr. Sokolovic. He noted he might have to leave the state unexpectedly in the event of a family emergency.

Mr. Weldon said he would circulate the next draft to the committee and bring it forward at the next meeting.

The next agenda item was on the district's retention policy.

Supt. Testani said he intended this item to be considered at the next meeting. He said there needed to be a discussion about the issue. He said in upper middle school grades there are students not participating in the online learning. He said it doesn't do anyone any good by promoting children and setting them up for difficulties in the next grade,

particularly 8th graders going into high school. If a student has difficulties in 9th grade, the likelihood of gaining their diploma is significantly lower than the average student.

Mr. Sokolovic said he did not want a situation where the diploma was the result of just passing kids along when they're not ready.

The superintendent said staff want to help children, but it should not be to the point where the grades do not reflect the work that is being produced. Dr. Black said sometimes students memorizing things from a book is not the best way to learn, but if given some tasks and some applied learning they can really excel. He said the district has to look at instructional practices.

Supt. Testani described a situation with an ELL student was receiving A's in English with the use of a translator, but was at entry-level language skills on a state exam.

In response to a question, the superintendent described the remedial-type courses that could be used in English and math to catch students up who fell behind during the pandemic. There will be summer school offered, but this would be used during the school year in place of electives.

Dr. Black said there is a buffer available for the students who need 25 credits to graduate with 32 credits being offered over four years.

The superintendent said the high school transition process was being discussed prior to COVID and it would be looked at again. Dr. Black said when we move towards students being more independent learners it will minimize the transitions from elementary to high school, which would be

the next big step.

Supt. Testani said a decision will be made on the course of action. He said the goal is to have students having skills to move on to their next step when they graduate.

Mr. Sokolovic moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lombard seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

DRAFT

POLICY 9171

REMOTE BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN IN-PERSON BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Except as otherwise required by emergency circumstances or Executive Order, all Board and Committee meetings shall be chaired in-person at the designated physical location of the meeting.

Any Board Member may participate remotely at any in-person Board Meeting at a maximum of up to six (6) times per calendar year.

Any Committee Member may participate remotely at any in-person Board Meeting at a maximum of up to three (3) times per calendar year.

At all times, when a Board Member participates remotely in a Board or Committee meeting, it shall be done in a manner that does not serve as a distraction from the overall meeting.

Any Board or Committee Member attempting to exceed the above referenced remote participation limitations will not be granted remote access as a meeting participant and will, instead, be considered absent for attendance and quorum-setting purposes.

DRAFT

Bridgeport Board of Education

Elementary Magnet Entrance & Performance Expectations Policy

The magnet schools (Classical Studies, Geraldine Claytor, High Horizons, Multicultural, Park City, ~~and Inter-district~~

~~Discovery~~) encourage students to pursue academic excellence. Instruction is centered on specific themes: project-based learning, language arts, world languages, and science (themes are listed by school as stated in the prior sentence). The magnet programs are rigorous and intended to groom students for college. We expect our students to excel in academic study and demonstrate personal conduct appropriate to an academic learning environment.

Bridgeport Public Magnet Schools are open to all students on an equal basis, including students with disabilities. A student with a disability retains all rights under IDEA in each of these schools. School personnel must ensure that a student's IEP and 504 Plan is implemented and all services are delivered.

The elementary magnet programs expect all students to be successful. However, to maintain academically high standards, elementary students in grades 1-8 who do not meet our minimum academic, attendance and/or behavioral requirements and parent commitment will be supported through a series of interventions. If after the implementation, documentation, and evaluation of intervention practices prove to be unsuccessful the students may be, at a time deemed appropriate, reassigned from the magnet school to their neighborhood schools.

Elementary Entrance Requirements for ~~Inter-district Discovery~~, Classical Studies, Geraldine Claytor, High Horizons, Multicultural, and Park City Magnets

All magnet lotteries will be held in a public setting and all parents of applicants will be notified of the location, date and time.

- A. Any pre-k program is not a part of the magnet program and does not guarantee entrance into the magnet program.

~~A. Pre-Kindergarten~~

~~Only Inter-district Discovery Magnet has a pre-K lottery which guarantees entrance into the school upon completion.~~

B. Kindergarten – ~~Grade 3~~

• Selection by lottery.

- Parents of currently enrolled/accepted students must meet parent commitment requirements in order to register an incoming sibling.

• There are no additional entry requirements.

C. Grades 1 - 8 at Classical Studies, Geraldine Claytor, High Horizons, Multicultural, and Park City must meet

the following criteria:

- Selection by lottery.
- A final grade of C or better in core academic subjects (Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies).
- A conduct/effort grade of 1 or 2 across the report card
- Student school attendance must be aligned with the Bridgeport Public School Attendance Policy.
- Signed Parent Commitment
- Teacher Recommendation Form
- Student Interview/ Writing Prompt

Criterion for reassignment from Classic Studies, Geraldine Claytor, High Horizons, Multicultural, and Park City: ~~Magnets~~

Grades 1-8 Reassignment Criteria:

A. A grade of "D" or below for two consecutive marking periods in a core subject (Reading, Writing, Math, Science & Social Studies).

- Academic interventions will be put in place through the SRBI process and documented prior to reassignment; See SRBI process attached. SRBI Link

B. A behavioral grade of a 3 or higher across the report card.

- Behavioral interventions will be put in place through the SRBI process and documented prior to reassignment; See SRBI process attached. SRBI Link

C. Failure to adhere to the Bridgeport Public School Attendance Policy. See BPS Attendance Policy attached. (Include Link) Attendance supports will be put in place and documented prior to reassignment.

D. For a Type 3 violation of the Code of Conduct (or a violation of the digital code of conduct) reassignment will coincide with the end of a marking period to assist the student's transition.

E. Family did not meet parent commitment requirement.

Reassignment Process:

- A. A notification letter regarding possible reassignment will be issued at the time of earning a grade of D or below, a behavior grade of 3 or higher, and/or failure to adhere to the BPS Attendance Policy.
- B. A parent/guardian meeting must be scheduled within 10 business days.
- C. Prior to the reassignment to the neighborhood school, the principal must provide the family with written notification which shall include a copy of the Magnet School Policy.
- D. The Assistant Superintendent must be notified of every student reassigned, identifying the school, race, ethnicity, sex, grade and reason. This information will be promptly reported to the Superintendent, who will then report the information to the Board of Education.

Reassignment Timeline:

~~A. Students who are reassigned after the second marking period will remain at the magnet school until the end of the year. They will be referred to their neighborhood school for the beginning of the new school year.~~

B. Students who surface for potential reassignment during ~~the third marking period, the school year~~ a letter will ~~go home~~ be provided (mail, email, school messenger etc.) to the parent/guardian notifying them of possible reassignment with a signature request. A meeting with the parent/guardian will be scheduled within 10 business days. The Principal will give the parent/guardian notice prior to the beginning of the neighborhood school reassignment. The student will be referred to his/ her neighborhood school for the beginning of the new school year.

~~C. Students who surface for potential reassignment during the fourth marking period will remain at the magnet school through the current year. During the first marking period of the next school year, the SRBI process will be implemented with fidelity and documented.~~

Appeal Process:

- After receiving final notification of reassignment, the parent/guardian may file an appeal with the Assistant Superintendent within ten (10) business days. The ~~Assistant Superintendent~~ Executive Director must approve or reject the appeal, in writing, within ten (10) business days.
- If the parent/guardian(s) is not in agreement, they may appeal to the Superintendent within ten (10) business days. The Superintendent must approve or reject the appeal in writing within ten (10) business days.
- If the parent/guardian is not in agreement with the Superintendent's decision, the parent/guardian can request in writing, a meeting with the BOE.
- The BOE will schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian to review their appeal and a final decision regarding the appeal will be rendered by the BOE within ten business days after the meeting date.
- The student will be allowed to remain in the designated magnet school pending the completion of the appeal process. In the event that the appeal process timelines are not adhered to by administration at the school or district levels, the appeal will be upheld.

- The student will be allowed to remain in the designated magnet school pending the completion of the appeal process.

Waiting List:

Every effort will be made to fill empty lottery seats by October 1st.

- If empty lottery seats remain after October 15, the district will assist in ensuring all seats are filled.
- Students on the lottery waiting list must apply each year to gain access to a magnet school.
- Once a student accepts a seat at a magnet program, his/her name will be removed from all other magnet school waiting lists for the current school year.

Bridgeport Board of Education

Elementary Magnet School Sibling Policy

A Sibling Policy has been adopted in order to encourage single, rather than divided, elementary school allegiances and thereby promote high levels of parental involvement and provide for continuity within the household.

Definition:

Within the context of this policy, siblings are defined as children with a common parent or legal Guardian **whom live within the same household. Criteria for entrance must be met by each sibling (i.e. twin, triplets etc.) in order to be included in the lottery for acceptance.**

Entrance criteria:

For Classical Studies, Geraldine Claytor (Lottery Students Only), High Horizons ~~Magnet~~, Multicultural ~~Magnet and Magnet~~, Park City ~~Magnet~~, and Interdiscovery Magnet schools:

- ~~There are no criteria for entering Pre-k – Grade 3~~
- ~~Grades 4-8 must meet minimal academic, attendance and behavioral standards.~~

The Process:

~~Pre-K/~~Kindergarten

- Kindergarten applicants, with a sibling(s) currently attending grades K-~~8~~7 in the same magnet school to which they have applied, will automatically gain admission into the school. Remaining spaces will be filled by non-sibling applicants.
 - Parents of currently enrolled/accepted students must meet parent commitment requirements in order to register an incoming sibling.
- In the event the number of sibling candidates alone exceeds the number of spaces available, a sibling lottery will be held with the non-sibling lottery to follow.
- Twins, triplets, etc., will be treated as one unit in the lottery with their lottery numbers placed on the same lottery waiting list.
- As follow-up to the definition of sibling, the parent or guardian will provide legal documentation as confirmation (if requested).

Waiting List:

Waiting lists are established for students applying for grades K-8.

- When a vacancy occurs, siblings will be given preference for admission over non-siblings in the

order in which their names appear on the waiting list.

- All entrance criteria for siblings grades 1-8 must be met.
- Every effort will be made to fill empty lottery seats by October 1st.
- If empty seats remain after October 15 the district will assist in ensuring all seats are filled.
- Students on the lottery waiting list must apply each year to gain access to a magnet school
- Once a student accepts a seat at a magnet program, their name will be removed from all other magnet school waiting lists for the current school year.

Revised: 11.26.2018

BOE Approved: 11.26.201

ROLE OF BOARD AND MEMBERS – 9010

1. General Duties

- A. The Board of Education represents the residents of the City of Bridgeport in carrying out the mandates of the General Statutes pertaining to education.
- B. The Board of Education shall determine all questions of general policy to be employed in the conduct of the schools.
- C. In determining school policy it shall:
 - (1) hear and consider facts and recommendations,
 - (2) adopt a plan, policy or course of action, and
 - (3) authorize the Superintendent of Schools, its chief executive officer, to carry out its policy.

2. Specific Powers and Duties

The Board of Education shall have authority to take all action necessary or advisable to meet its responsibilities under state statute and City Charter including but not limited to the following:

- A. Create, abolish, modify and maintain such positions, schools, divisions and classifications as may be necessary for the efficient administration of the educational enterprise.
- B. To elect a Superintendent of Schools in accordance with state statutes.
- C. To consider and adopt an annual budget, prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.
- D. To determine the number, classification, duties and remuneration of employees.
- E. To establish policies for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with the state statutes.
- F. To provide for the appraisal of the efficiency of staffing requirements.
- G. To initiate and approve the acquisition and disposition of school sites, to initiate and approve plans for school buildings.
- H. To consider any specific recommendations made by the Superintendent of Schools.
- I. To keep the citizenry informed of purposes, values, conditions and needs of public education in the City.
- J. To consider, revise and adopt any changes in the curriculum.
- K. To take any other actions required or permitted by law.
- L. To make reasonable provision to implement the educational interests of the State, as defined by law, so that

- (1) each child shall have for the period prescribed in the General Statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences;
 - (2) the school district shall finance at a reasonable level an educational program designed to achieve this end;
 - (3) the school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds;
 - (4) the mandates in the General Statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education shall be implemented.
- M. Triennially adopt a Strategic Plan and review such Plan annually.
- N. In furtherance of the Strategic Plan, establish annual goals for the District, as well as for the Board.

3. Staff Communications to the Board

All formal reports to the Board or any Board committee from administrators, supervisors, teachers or other staff members shall be submitted through the Superintendent. (cf. 4118.111/4218.111- Grievances)

4. Board Communication to Staff

All official communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent, and the superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the Board's problems, concerns and actions. (ct. 9020- Public Statements)

Any Board member may communicate with staff to obtain pertinent information to assist them in their decision making with due notice to, and prior approval from, the Superintendent stating the purpose of the contact. Notwithstanding, such staff may require that such communication be confined to transpiring in writing or that, if such communication takes place in the form of a face-to-face meeting or telephone conversation, that it take place in the presence of the staff member's supervisor and/or union representative.

5. Visits to Schools

Individual Board members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will make arrangements to do so through the administrators of the various schools where appropriate, provided that the Superintendent shall be apprised of such visitation and has provided prior approval.

(cf. 2220- Representative and Deliberative Groups) (cf. 9133- Special/Advisory Committee)

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

1-200	Definitions (public agency)
10-4a	Educational interest of the State identified
10-4b	Failure of local or regional board to implement educational interests
10-220	Duties of Boards of Education
10-221	Board of education to prescribe rules
10-241	Powers of school district

ADOPTED: 02/13/2019

REVISED: N/A

TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS – 9100

- A. The Board shall transact all business at a legal meeting of the Board.
- B. The Board shall act as a whole entity, except that a committee created in accordance with these bylaws may act on matters before it in conformity with the committee's purpose or charge.
- C. Individual members shall make no commitments for the Board or issue orders for the Board, except when executing an assignment delegated by the Board or as needed under the authority an office held, nor shall any individual member issue directives to district staff.
- D. The Board shall concern itself with questions of educational policy, and not with administrative details of the district's operations.

ADOPTED: 02/13/2019
REVISED: N/A