

BOARD OF EDUCATION

City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

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Bridgeport, Connecticut

August 14, 2020

Board Members:

A meeting of the Governance Committee of the Board of Education will be held at Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science & Technology Education Center, 60 St. Stephens Road, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 06605 on Monday, August 17, 2020, commencing at 5:00 p.m.

Due to health concerns related to COVID-19, members of the public will not be allowed in the meeting space, but will be able to view the meeting through live stream on <https://www.bridgeportedu.net/stream>.

Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes – June 1, 2020
2. Discussion and Possible Action on Policy #5140

John R. Weldon,
Chairman
Board of Education

Governance Committee Members:

Hernan Illingworth (Chair)
Jessica Martinez
John R. Weldon
Michael J. Testani (Staff)

Monday, June 1, 2020

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held June 1, 2020, by video and audio conference, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

Committee members present were Chair Hernan Illingworth and Jessica Martinez. Board members Joseph Sokolovic, Albert Benejan, and Sybil Allen were present. Committee member John Weldon joined the meeting subsequently as noted.

Acting Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

Ms. Martinez moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of March 2, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Illingworth and approved by a 1-0 vote. Voting in favor was Mr. Illingworth. Ms. Martinez abstained.

The next agenda item was on the board's Series 1000 policies.

Atty. Floyd Dugas of Berchem & Moses was present.

Atty. Dugas said he had reviewed the 1000 Series and most of his suggested changes are purely technical in nature such updating statutes that don't exist any longer. He said the only real requirement the board has under the law is to have a provision on community engagement and the board has one of the more robust community engagement policies he has ever seen.

Mr. Illingworth suggested reconvening in seven to ten days to look at the technical changes made by Atty. Dugas and to send the policies to the full board.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested future policies be reviewed by the committee first before sending them to Atty. Dugas, rather than have him review them twice. Mr. Illingworth said he agreed. Mr. Testani said he would recommend Atty. Dugas continue to look simultaneously to see if we were out of compliance with any laws.

Mr. Testani noted a committee has worked very hard to update the student handbook, formerly the Code of Conduct, which should also be reviewed by the committee and Atty. Dugas.

Mr. Weldon joined the meeting.

The next agenda item was discussion and possible action on a technology device fee.

Mr. Testani said the district is receiving donations and making purchases of technology device and it is important to have a plan for maintenance, replenishment, and repair moving forward so down the road we are not in the same predicament we are today. He noted many districts impose charges for musical instruments and participation in sports.

Mr. Testani said after discussions with Mr. Postolowski he is suggesting a nominal technology usage fee that would allow us to maintain our devices. He said he believes \$25 for a year is fair.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said this is similar to

what is done with musical instruments loaned to students for a year.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said the amount of devices would total about 20,000 devices for K-12. He said cost of the devices are \$300 and up. He said in the past the district had lost up to 20 percent of devices in a year, which is not affordable. The plan is to remain self-insured with the fees, rather than have to deal with a third party.

Mr. Weldon recommended against one fee per family rather than per child in order to make things more equitable. He suggested the funds collected be kept in an interest-bearing escrow account.

Ms. Martinez said things would not be equitable for families with four or five children. She said something affordable was needed. She said parents have told her during the distance learning that they don't have enough devices at home. She said the Caribe baseball program had a discounts for siblings.

Mr. Illingworth suggested looking at a sliding scale. Mr. Testani said if a family receives four devices for \$100 they are getting \$1200 to \$1600 worth of devices. He said trying to decide who gets a discount and work it out logistically is a nightmare. He said when he supervised summer school one fee was instituted and no one had trouble paying what they needed to.

Ms. Martinez said she agreed with whatever Mr. Testani said would work.

Jeff Postolowski, director of IT, said the biggest problem is damage, not theft or loss, and the nominal fee helps with

damage to keyboards and screens. He asked if the committee was looking at imposing the \$25 fee in the event of damage. He said he believed when people have skin in the game you see a substantially lower break rate on the devices. He said districts all over the country are facing the same issues.

Mr. Postolowski said a technology fee may allow the expansion of the ability to provide wireless service inside of devices.

Mr. Testani said many of the districts statewide that have one-to-one devices are that way because many families provide devices for their children. He said in Bridgeport some families may opt out if they have their own devices.

Mr. Benejan said we had to be mindful of the income of the families. He said he personally helped with obtaining packets for a lot of families who have multiple children, including one with eight children.

Mr. Weldon said he would support a procedure to accommodate hardships that was not overly complicated.

Mr. Testani said one option is to distribute functional, older devices to families who have trouble paying the fee. He said schools could be given discretion for families that are in dire need and that the amount be taken out of the per-pupil funding that each school gets from the district.

Ms. Martinez noted the struggles of board members to work with the nine devices they received.

Mr. Testani said there could be fundraisers at the school-level through PACs to sponsor families that are in need.

Atty. Dugas commended the effort because technology is so critical these days and we don't know what the world will look like going forward. He said he had heard some great ideas for dealing with the extreme hardship cases. He said it could probably be done under the student activity accounts. He said he would worry about some schools being less organized in fundraising resulting in a loss of access to students.

Mr. Postolowski said spending money with a proper plan is the key here.

Mr. Testani said if the responsibility was on building leadership they would be motivated to seek out grant opportunities and other ways to maintain their devices.

Mr. Postolowski said the schools with substantially higher damage rates would have to take into consideration how they are handling technology. He said this is a continued problem we struggle with.

Mr. Illingworth said he believed this was definitely needed, and the plan should be that whatever monies are not used to replace damaged devices will be invested in buying new devices. He said he wanted the community to understand that we are not doing what he did in the past with Chrome Books, which often stayed unused in carts in classrooms.

Mr. Illingworth said children will have the opportunity to take home brand-new devices.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said he could have something drafted in about ten days for the committee's review.

Mr. Testani added that even \$500,000 would not replace 15 percent of the district's fleet of devices, so the idea is to put a plan in place to ensure we can maintain the proper technology for the kids of Bridgeport for generations to come.

Mr. Weldon moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Martinez seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod



Bridgeport Public Schools
Policies and Procedures

Elementary & Secondary
STUDENT DISCIPLINE
Student Attire

Policy No.5140

4/23/12

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Mandatory School Uniform for Bridgeport School Students, Grades PK-8

- **Pants** – Navy or Tan dress or docker-style pants must be worn with a belt at the waist. Jeans are prohibited.
- **Skirts, Jumpers or Skorts** – Navy or Tan must be worn and must be knee level or longer. Blouse or polo shirts must be worn under the jumper. Jeans are prohibited.
- **Shorts** – Navy or Tan knee length dress or docker-style shorts. Shorts must be worn with a belt at the waist. Jeans are prohibited. Shorts may be worn only between April 1 and November 1.
- **Shirts** – White plain collared polo shirt, dress shirt, long or short sleeve. Two additional colors may be selected by each school's leadership team. Shirts must be tucked into pants. Individual schools will choose their colors. Every school has an option to create a school logo, if desired. Logos must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Schools that already have a logo must send it to the Superintendent or his/her designee for review and documentation.
- **Sweatshirts Or Sweaters Can Be Pullover Or Zippered** – Only pullover or cardigan sweaters in the solid colors of Navy or Tan (no patterns) without hoods or decorations or wording will be allowed. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweaters vests and blazers.
- **Shoes or Sneakers** – Shoes are strongly recommended over sneakers. In addition to shoes, white or black sneakers are permitted, and appropriate everyday boots. Laces on shoes, sneakers, or boots must be tied.
- **Physical Education Class Attire** – Students may wear sweats to school on scheduled physical education day. School approved t-shirts and shorts are permitted. Physical Education attire colors will be chosen by individual schools.

Refer to the Bridgeport Public Schools' Code of Conduct for further dress code restrictions which can be obtained from the Principal's office.

Mandatory School Uniform for Bridgeport School Students, High School Grades

- Pants – Navy, Tan or Black dress or Dockers trouser style pants must be worn with a belt at the waist. Jeans are prohibited.
- Skirts, Jumpers or Skorts – Navy, Tan and Black must be worn and must be knee level or longer. Blouse or polo shirts must be worn under the jumper. Jeans are prohibited.
- Shorts – Navy, Tan and Black knee length dress or Dockers trouser style shorts. Shorts must be worn with a belt at the waist. Jeans are prohibited. Shorts may be worn only between April 1 and November 1.
- Shirts – White plain collared polo shirt, dress shirt, long or short sleeve. Three additional colors may be selected by each school's leadership team. Shirts must be tucked into pants. Individual schools will choose their colors before the end of school term 2011. Every school has an option to create a school logo, if desired. Logos must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Schools that already have a logo must send it to the Superintendent or his/her designee for review and documentation.
- Sweatshirt Or Sweaters Can Be Pullover Or Zippered – Only uniform pullover or cardigan sweaters in the solid colors of Navy or Tan (no patterns) without hoods or decorations or wording will be allowed. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweaters, vest and blazers.
- Shoes Or Sneakers – Shoes are strongly recommended over sneakers. In addition to shoes, white or black sneakers are permitted, and appropriate everyday boots. Laces on shoes, sneakers, or boots must be tied.
- Physical Education Class Attire - School approved gym attire may be worn in physical education classes only.

** Refer to the Bridgeport Public Schools' Code of Conduct Section for further dress code restrictions which can be obtained from the Principal's office.*

Exceptions for Designated Days or Events

Each school principal may designate specific days or events during which deviations from the approved uniform will be permitted.

Compliance

All students are required to adhere to the required attire. School administrators and teachers are encouraged to use positive reinforcement to obtain compliance with school attire requirements. However, when a student fails to comply with the school attire policy, discipline is appropriate. The following discipline procedures will apply:

- (1) First Offense: Verbal counseling and notification to parent/legal guardian.
 - (2) Second Offense: Written warning and notification to parent/legal guardian.
 - (3) Third Offense: Written warning and a mandatory meeting between the Principal and the parent/legal guardian to explain School Attire Policy and obtain compliance.
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- (4) **Fourth and Subsequent Offenses:** At the principal's discretion, attendance at special programs and activities may be forfeited or withheld until the student comes to school in uniform. If the foregoing disciplinary measures do not achieve compliance with the School Attire Policy, the principal may impose stronger discipline, including in-school suspension.
- (5) The principal of each school will provide standardized letters to be utilized for student warnings and notifications to parent/legal guardian.
- (6) There will be a one-time grace period of seven (7) days at the start of the 2011-2012 school year, during which current enrolled students will not be disciplined for failing to wear the mandatory uniform clothing. Any student transferring into the Bridgeport School District from another school district during the course of a school year will also be allowed a one-time grace period of seven (7) days. During this grace period, students will be encouraged to obtain and wear clothing that meets the uniform requirements. After the completion of this one-time grace period, the foregoing disciplinary procedures will go into effect to address any continuing non-compliance.

Clothing and Items Prohibited for All Grades.

Please refer to the Bridgeport Public Schools' handbook, Dress Code section – pages 19 and 20.

Accommodation of Protected Expression

Students may wear jewelry, accessories, necklaces, wristbands, or pins/buttons that contain expressive messages as long as they do not violate the uniform policy or dress code.

Disruptive

Any clothing or accessory which is likely to cause a disruption or distraction from school activities is considered inappropriate for students to wear during the school day as outlined in the Code of Conduct. The principal will decide if **clothing is disruptive**.

Religious and Health Accommodations

When the religious beliefs or health needs of a student conflict with the school attire policy, the schools will provide reasonable accommodation. The parent/legal guardian of any student desiring uniform policy exceptions will notify their school principal in writing of the requested accommodation and the factual basis for the request. Approved coverings worn as part of a student's religious practices or beliefs will not be prohibited under this policy. Medical documentation will be required for health accommodations. The procedures for this process are set forth in paragraph 11, below.

Procedures for Exemption

A parent/legal guardian may request an exemption from a mandatory school uniform policy for medical or religious reasons. A request for an exemption must be made within ten (10) operational days of the beginning of the school year or within ten (10) operational days of being enrolled in any given school for the first time (note: The term, "operational days" is defined as days when school is in session). Medical exemption requests must be signed by a medical doctor. See your school principal for further information on exceptions. A written request for an exemption must be submitted to the school principal using the Application for Exemption Form that can be obtained from the school.

The school principal or his/her designee must meet with the parent/legal guardian within five (5) school days. The principal will discuss the Bridgeport School Uniform policy and verify the accuracy of the information on the Exemption form. The parent/legal guardian will be notified in writing of the outcome of the conference within three (3) school days. A copy of said notice that the application has been granted or denied shall be attached to the application. The application shall also be initialed by the principal and a copy of the initialed application and the notice sent to the parent/legal guardian shall be forwarded to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will affirm or deny the principal's decision. If the parent/legal guardian does not agree with the decision, they have a right to appeal to the Board of Education within five (5) school days by submitting a letter to the Superintendent. Consideration will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Clothing Assistance

It is the policy of the Board of Education that no student will be denied an education due to genuine financial inability to obtain clothing that complies with the Board's Attire Policy. Any student, for whom compliance with the school attire policy poses a genuine financial burden, may submit a written request for clothing assistance to their school principal specifying the clothing needed together with a statement of financial need. The Superintendent will provide principals with standardized forms to be completed by parents/legal guardians seeking clothing assistance. School principals or their designees will assist families in financial need to obtain clothing that complies with the school attire policy. In meeting requests for assistance, principals or their designees will consider community resources such as clothing or financial donations from corporations, members of the community, local businesses, parent organizations, and charitable organizations; clothing discounts from local merchants; and providing additional time for a student to obtain clothing that complies with the School Attire Policy.

Legal Reference: This policy is authorized by Section 10-221f of the General Statutes of Connecticut, which provides in salient part that: "[a] local or regional board of education may specify a school uniform for students under its jurisdiction."

Revised and amended April 25, 2011

Adopted:

Last Reviewed /Revised: 5/14/12

Cross Reference: Policy No.

/Regulation: Related Superintendent

Procedure: Legal Reference:



Bridgeport Public Schools
Policies and Procedures

Elementary & Secondary

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Uniform Policy

Policy No.5140(a)

4/23/12

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Bridgeport Board of Education Public School Uniform Policy

1. Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the Bridgeport Board of Education to regulate the attire of students during the school day. All students in grades PK-12 attending the Bridgeport Public Schools will wear mandatory uniforms every school day. School uniform policies can promote school safety, improve discipline, and enhance the learning environment. School uniforms are effective in promoting an orderly school environment.

2a. Parental Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/legal guardians to ensure that their child/children dress in compliance with the requirements of this policy.

2b. Staff Responsibility

As role models, school personnel, including substitutes, should wear professional attire in the educational setting. School personnel should ensure that all students adhere to the School Uniform Policy.

Adopted:

Last Reviewed / Revised: 5/14/12

Cross Reference: Policy No.

/Regulation: Related Superintendent

Procedure: Legal Reference: