

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF
EDUCATION, held March 12, 2025, at City Hall, 45
Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. Present were members Joseph Sokolovic and Jennifer Perez*. Board members Andre Woodson* and Maritza Estremera Jimenez* were present

Mr. Sokolovic noted he was chairing the meeting this evening.

(*remote participation)

Interim Supt. Dr. Royce Avery was present.

Ms. Perez moved to change the order of business to move up Item B to the first item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Dr. Albert Sackey, assistant superintendent, discussed Policy 5125 on medical records. He said Policy 5151 was the current policy on student health records. He said the policy will be kept, but the CAFE policy on students' health and medical records policy, 5125.11, will be added. He said the change includes

specific language around HIPAA (1996) and the FERPA. There will also be a sample HIPAA-compliant authorization for release of health information.

Ms. Estremera Jimenez suggested changing a reference to a specific HIPAA privacy officer. Dr. Sackey said it should say “the school health officer as its HIPAA privacy officer.”

Mr. Sokolovic moved “*to strike out the name and insert the title in the place where the name appears.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Perez and unanimously approved.

In response to a question, Dr. Sackey said the CAGE policy was legally vetted. He said the current policy was last updated in April of 2012.

Mr. Sokolovic recommended we push this to the full board and waive the first and second read for immediate implementation.

Mr. Sokolovic moved “*the item to the full board with the waive of the first read and second read for immediate implementation.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Perez and unanimously approved.

The next agenda was on the use of exclusionary timeout settings, Policy P5144.2.

Dr. Sackey said from the special education lens there is procedure that is followed, but there is no district policy that currently exists. He said the policy is intended to cover all students. He said this is also a CAGE policy. He said there is currently no such district policy. There are definitions of exclusionary timeout, seclusion, and physical restraint. The physical space and timing are also discussed, and included is a sample data collection for a child in a designated timeout setting.

Dr. Sackey discussed the definition of timeout, seclusion, and physical restraint. Mr. Sokolovic noted that there are employees trained in physical restraint. Dr. Sackey said there should be at least staff member trained in every building.

In response to a question, Dr. Sackey said the training is in crisis prevention (CPI). Ms. Perez said most of the restraints require a two-person hold. Dr. Sackey said he could provide the complete breakdown by building. He said currently we're training special education teachers, aides, and some administrators. He said staff in-house does recertification and full training.

Ms. Perez said each school should know who their crisis professional is. She said she was not pushing for the use of physical restraints; the training includes de-escalation and using it as a last resort.

Dr. Sackey said the goal is to use physical restraint as the last option.

In response to a question, Dr. Sackey discussed seclusion. He said safety is the first consideration or if the child is not regulated in a common space. Mr. Sokolovic said seclusion and restraints had been overused in some districts in the past. Dr. Sackey said our staff are very mindful of that.

Mr. Sokolovic said the policy on seclusion is now being mainstreamed, which would increase the use and involvement of staff members who may be unfamiliar with the parameters. Dr. Sackey said there will have to be training.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested embedding the words about health and safety. He said we have all seen the result of implicit biases. Dr. Sackey said the introduction to the policy does address that. Mr. Sokolovic suggested looking at it and bouncing it off of CABE.

Ms. Perez said she did not think it would be a go-to procedure because of the paperwork that comes with it. Dr. Sackey said that was correct.

Dr. Avery said seclusion would not be used as a go-to disciplinary action by a teacher. He said most are used in an IEP and a behavioral plan. He said he did not want to be specific in the policy or add words to it.

He said the policy was pretty standard with other districts in the state.

Mr. Sokolovic said his concern was the whole universe of teachers will be looking at the policy, not just special education teachers. He said his concern was overusing seclusion, especially in communities like ours.

Mr. Sokolovic moved “*to push to the full board for a first read the use of exclusionary timeout settings Policy P5144.2.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Perez and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on nondiscrimination policy and notice P0521(a).

Dr. Sackey said our current policy is 5162, which was last updated in 2012. The requests i to replace the policy with CAGE policy 0521(a). It expands the explanation of discrimination and harassment and adds the contact person at the district level. It also provides contact information for the U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Division.

Ms. Estremera Jimenez noted there was a placeholder in the document to insert a website. She requested the date of the last update be put in the document.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *“to push the nondiscrimination policy and notice as presented by Dr. Sackey with the changes he noted, with the waiver of the first and second read for immediate implementation.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Perez and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on alcohol use, drugs, and tobacco, including performance -enhancing substances) P5131.6.

Dr. Sackey said the current district policy 5136, which covers elementary and secondary student smoking, and 5137, which is on drug and alcohol use. He said the recommendation is to replace the two policies with the CAFE policy. He said the new policy expands the definition of drugs, controlled substances, what under the influence means, electronic nicotine delivery system, liquid nicotine, vapor products, and student privacy rights. Also discussed are performance-enhancing drugs, medical marijuana, and use of CBD products. Recommended disciplinary actions are also included.

Dr. Sackey said the new policy covers a lot more than the old policy.

Ms. Perez asked if there could be more specifics on discipline. Dr. Sackey said the code of conduct also covers infractions and consequences. He said there

are provisions for all students and some specific to athletes.

Dr. Avery said the policy puts us in compliance with state regulations, which have changed several times since 2012. He said the code of conduct is in compliance with state regulations; the only issue is the lack of policies in this area. He said it was important to get something in place and work through with the athletic director the provisions on athletes. He added that there would be new disciplinary legislation at the state level, which would require another update.

Ms. Perez said we do need a policy, but she suggested interventions, not just suspensions, be used. Dr. Avery said that would be important. Dr. Sackey said the provisions on athletes discuss first, and second offenses. There is also the idea of an annual contract for athletes.

Ms. Estremera Jimenez said language on page 3, policy implications, indicates the board needs to choose the policy we want. Dr. Sackey said about five pages that he sent were just background information.

Mr. Sokolovic said he could see this policy being revised by the full board, especially in the area of discipline. He said he would recommend the policy take effect in the new school year and not before, in compliance with board policy, so students have

notice. He suggested pushing this to the board for a first read and have Dr. Avery look into the concerns raised by Ms. Perez and his concern that the policy states that marijuana use is illegal in the state. He said it is still illegal for those under age 21.

Mr. Sokolovic said he worried about separate discipline tracks for things such as smoking, vaping, and marijuana.

Ms. Perez said her question is probably covered by the code of conduct.

Ms. Perez moved *“to bring it to the full board for the first read.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Ms. Perez moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod