



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

## New Britain Board of Education Policy Committee Meeting

June 21, 2021 – 6:00 PM | New Britain High School

### Call to Order and Opening

Mr. Nicholas Mercier called the meeting to order at 6:18 PM.

### Board Members Present

Mr. Anthony Kane\*, Mr. Joseph Listro\*, Mr. Nicholas Mercier\*, Ms. Diana Reyes\*, Dr. Violet Jiménez Sims\*

*\*Committee member*

### CSDNB Staff Present

Mr. Matthew Cannata#, Mr. Michael Foran#, Ms. Kristin Salerni, Ms. Nancy Sarra, Mr. Mark Spalding#

*#Participated remotely*

### Old Business

#### Review School Uniform/Attire Survey Feedback

Mr. Matthew Cannata, Manager of Safety and Communications, shared qualitative feedback from the families who chose the option of a modified (hybrid) uniform policy on the uniform/attire survey. This information was requested by Mr. Mercier at the Regular Board of Education Meeting on June 7, 2021.

Mr. Mercier recommended revising Policy 5132.10 – School Attire based on parent feedback and Board member input in order to make it more inclusive and less biased.

Recommended revisions to the Board Policy Statement include:

- Revise Section I: Statement of Policy to read “The New Britain Board of Education has determined that uniforms will be mandatory for students in grades K-5” striking “...and these students shall abstain from wearing or possessing specified items during the school day.”
- Revise first sentence of Section II: Statement of Purpose to read “The New Britain Board of Education has determined that reasonable expectations for school attire can further important educational interests by promoting safety in school communities and pride in the school.”
- Strike the second, third, and fourth sentences of Section II: Statement of Purpose.
- Amend Section II: Statement of Purpose to include “Furthermore, the Board of Education, in partnership with families, looks to create a safe, engaging, and inclusive school environment.”
- Strike Section III: School Uniform for Students Grades K-8
- Strike Section IV: Staff Responsibility
- Strike Section V: Voluntary School Uniforms for High School Students, Grades 9-12

### New Britain Board of Education

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Recommended revisions to the Administrative Procedure of Policy 5132.10 – School Attire include:

- Strike Section I: Parental Responsibility
- Rename Section II: “Districtwide School Attire Guidelines (all students Pre-K through Grade 12)”
- Strike Subsection A of Section II
- Amend Subsection B of Section II by inserting “marijuana” after alcohol and adding “or other messages or images inconsistent with district discrimination and anti-bullying policies” at the end.
- Revise Subsection C of Section II to read “Undershirts or underpants worn as outer garments, or clothing worn in such a manner as to expose undergarments.”
- Revise Subsection D of Section II to read “Bare feet, bedroom slippers, roller blades, roller-skates, cleats or spikes, or footwear that creates a safety hazard. (i.e. backless sandals)”
- Strike Subsection E of Section II replacing with “Head coverings should not cover or obstruct the face, except in the case of religious coverings.”
- Strike Subsection F of Section II replacing with “Any item of clothing, jewelry, or accessories that may present a safety hazard to the student, other students or staff.”
- Strike Subsection G of Section II.
- Strike Subsection H of Section II replacing with “Electronic devices are permitted for educational purposes.”
- Strike Subsection I of Section II.
- Rename Section III: “Districtwide School Attire Guidelines (all students Pre-K through Grade 5)”
- Strike first paragraph of Section III
- Rename Subsection A of Section III “Students in grades Pre-K through Grade 5 shall wear the following uniform during school hours:”
- Strike Section IIIA(a) replacing with “Safe and comfortable bottoms in either solid colors or patterned with no graphics or logos with the exception of CSDNB related logos.”
- Strike Section IIIA(b) replacing with “Solid colored or patterned shirt with either long or short sleeves. Tee shirts of a solid white color, without graphics, text, or logos may be worn under the uniform shirt.”
- Strike Section IIIA(c)
- Strike Section IIIA(d) and replace with “Additional layers such as sweaters, blazers, vests, or sweatshirts, are optional. Any such item must be solid or patterned without graphics and logos with the exception of CSDNB related logos.”
- Strike Section IIIA(e)
- Strike entire Subsection B of Section III
- Revise Section IV: Exceptions for Designated Days or Events to read “Each school principal may periodically designate specific days or events (I.e. school picnic, field day, or spirit week) during which deviations from the approved guidelines will be permitted. Additionally each Friday shall be a districtwide dress down day in Grades Pre-K through 5.”
- Strike Section V: Religious and Health Accommodations
- Strike Section VI: Accommodation of Free Expression
- Revise beginning of first sentence of Section VII: Administrative Review from “Any student who believes...” to “Any student or family who believes...”

Mr. Mercier recommended eliminating a separate Administrative Procedure and adding all of the revised language onto the end of the Board Policy Statement itself. A draft policy with all recommended edits will be brought forward to the full Board for approval at the next regular Board Meeting. Superintendent Sarra will send a message out to families about the draft policy.

## New Business

### Review and Approve Minutes from the Policy Committee Meeting on May 17, 2021

There were no recommended changes to the minutes from the Policy Committee Meeting on May 17, 2021.

***Dr. Jiménez Sims motioned to approve the minutes from the Policy Committee Meeting on May 17, 2021 as submitted, seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion carried unanimously.***

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## **Discuss Potential Policy Regarding Racism and Racial Equity**

Mr. Mark Spalding, Director of Pupil Services, shared information he had gathered about adoption of a potential policy regarding racism and racial equity. He provided committee members with copies of New Haven Public Schools' Policy for Race and Equity, our current Policy 0523.00 – Equity and Diversity, and a draft position statement. Mr. Spalding concluded that our current policy is very similar to both New Haven and CAFE's policies. Mr. Spalding stated that legal counsel at Shipman and Goodwin are hesitant to recommend adoption of a policy that is not legally required or necessary for board operations due to the increased obligation on the Board and potential liability issues. Shipman further recommended that adoption of a Board Position Statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion could augment current Board policy instead.

Policy Committee members reviewed the draft position statement provided by Shipman. Committee members recommended amending the second sentence of the position statement to include the addition of "parental status" with pregnancy. The revised position statement will be brought to the full Board for approval/adoption. Mr. Mercier also recommended that Board Policy 0523.00 – Equity and Diversity should be reviewed at a future Policy Committee Meeting.

## **Closing and Adjournment**

Dr. Jiménez Sims motioned to adjourn at 8:17 PM, seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion carried unanimously.

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