



Torrington Board of Education

LYNDA T. REITMAN
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

Policy Committee Regular Meeting Wednesday, October 7, 2015 Adjourned to Monday, October 5, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present: Ellen Hoehne, Committee Chair; John Kissko; Jim Lamoin

Also Present: Board of Education: Jessica Richardson

Administration: Eric Baim, Director of Secondary Education

Students: Darnell Battle (Gr. 11), Ashiespal Bharara (Gr. 9), Alexia Fox (Gr. 10) (6:30 p.m.), Tylar Young (Gr. 12) and Teachers: Matt Grenfell (THS), Robin Magistrali (THS)

1. Ms. Hoehne called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.
2. Roll Call was taken.
3. Mr. Lamoin moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 2, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kissko. All in favor.
4. Cell phone/electronic device usage – presentation and discussion: The students gave a presentation in favor of allowing electronic devices in the classroom to enhance the academic experience and improve learning. The students compared the Torrington High School policy with the policy of other nearby high schools. Points that were made included the unavailability of the library and computer labs during study hall time, curriculum being pushed back due to school computers not being available, and the unreliability of the functionality of school computers. Students suggested that allowing students to use their own personal devices would solve many of the problems cited.

Students talked about online tools such as Google Classroom and Kahoot which they feel would be beneficial to the learning experience as updated textbooks can be accessed, paper saved, teacher evaluation tools enhanced, and a more engaging atmosphere created for the students.

Students stressed that their proposal to the committee was based on studies and not on recreation, and they stressed that any usage would be at the discretion of the teacher involved.

In addition, the students felt that lunch period was not unlike a work-break and that all students ought to be allowed to use their cell phones at that time. Also, students touched on the security need to have

their personal phones on their person in case of emergency.

The students and the committee members had a discussion on the students proposed ideas and other related topics. Ms. Hoehne asked those in attendance to consider teacher proficiency and what the learning curve would be for teachers who were not yet using modern online tools. Ms. Hoehne also pointed out that five years ago, when the current policy was written, the high school did not have the capacity to host schoolwide tools.

All in attendance briefly reviewed a sample policy from Shipman & Goodwin.

Members agreed that teacher input would be important to include when considering a new policy, and Mr. Baim agreed to do a survey to get feedback from THS teachers. Mr. Baim also agreed to speak with area principals on what their experience with electronic devices in the classroom has been like and to reach out to the schools in the state who are in the same demographic group as THS.

Timeline was discussed, and it was decided that the students' idea that a trial period with a group of students be held was not appropriate. Members agreed that it would be ideal to have a new policy ready for the beginning of the third marking period but were unsure that such a deadline would provide enough time to gather sufficient feedback.

It was agreed that members should carefully review and consider the sample policy by Shipman & Goodwin and wait to hear Mr. Baim's reports.

5. Comments for the Good of the Order: None
6. Topics for Future Meetings: more on electronic device usage policy
7. Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lamoin and seconded by Mr. Kissko. All in favor.
8. Meeting adjourned 7:33 p.m.