

1. Call to Order

Sean Nugent; Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:56PM. Other members present: Charles Raymond, Tom Turner, Dan Harris, Cindy Luty and Deborah Burke-Grabarek. Ed Gauthier was absent. Also present: Dr. Seitsinger; Superintendent, Gloria Homiski; Recording Secretary, John Spang; Director of Finance, Dr. Ivy Davis-Tomczuk; Principal PPMS and Director of Curriculum, and Ray Bernier; Principal PVMS.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved, to approve the regular meeting minutes of 12-11-17 as presented. Burke-Grabarek/Luty. Raymond, Turner, Nugent also in favor. Harris Abstained. Motion Carries.

4. Public Comment

Sean Nugent; Chair, wanted to clarify that the Public Comment portion of the agenda is not to be used as a question and answer period.

Bob Congdon; First Selectman, thanked the District for hosting a Legislative Breakfast at PVMS on 1-11-18. Several State Representatives were in attendance as well as many Superintendents and Board Members from surrounding districts.

5. Principals' Reports

Dr. Ivy Davis-Tomczuk: A Winter Concert will take place on January 25th at 6:30PM at PVMS. The Jazz Ensemble performed a holiday concert before the winter break. Parents, senior citizens, and members from ARC were in attendance.

Students at PPMS entered a Patriot's Pen writing contest. Delany Phelps; grade 7, was selected as our local winner. Delany and her family, as well as Dr. Davis-Tomczuk and Christopher Pickett (LA Teacher) will attend a dinner in Rocky Hill on Sunday to celebrate her success.

Ray Bernier: Star Testing has begun at PVMS. A family movie night will be held on 1-26-18. A Father/Daughter Dance is in the works.

6. Chairperson's Report

Sean mentioned a positive Facebook post on the Community Voice page. Parents and community members were very happy to see Dr. Seitsinger at a school basketball game. They were also happy to see young children approach Dr. Seitsinger and be greeted with high fives.

7. Reports of Sub Committees

LEARN: Cindy Luty reported on the December and January meetings (see attached).

CABE: Sean Nugent thanked Dr. Seitsinger, Gloria Homiski, Mike House and the custodial Staff for hosting and preparing for the Legislative

Breakfast. Sean gave special thanks to Katarina Potter, Kim Heinzelman and Lona Cote for their hard work and dedication. They cooked a delicious meal and decorated for the event. Sean stated that he will prepare a summary of topics discussed at the breakfast.

Highlights from CABE are attached.

Finance Sub Committee: 1-4-18 meeting cancelled due to inclement weather. A Town Meeting will be held on 1-25-18 at 7:30PM at PVMS. Capital Projects will be presented to the community at this time. A referendum will be held on 2-6-18.

Transportation Sub Committee: No meeting

Curriculum Sub Committee: No meeting

Community Relations Sub Committee: No meeting

8. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Seitsinger congratulated Melissa Lennon on her appointment to BOF Chair.

He also thanked Mike House, his custodial staff, and the Town Crew for their dedication to plowing and clean up during the recent storm.

He explained that the street light at the entrance to PPMS will be fixed within the next couple of weeks.

Dr. Seitsinger talked about soliciting a community survey to determine how many households have computers and internet access. If households have adequate technology, snow days might be turned into school days conducted at home.

Dr. Seitsinger stated that he has attended two successful Kitchen Table Talks so far this year. He thanked community members for hosting the events. Plans for a third one are in the works.

Moved, to bring forward the Mystic Air Quality Report from the Information section of this agenda. Luty/Burke-Grabarek. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Dr. Seitsinger explained that Air Quality testing is conducted annually and that no problems have been reported. He also stated that the ground water monitoring that has been ongoing since the oil spill will soon be coming to an end due to clean results.

A Preston student; Abigail Tucker, received "Student of the Month" at the Norwich Free Academy. She was nominated by her dance teacher and is a wonderful representative of Preston.

Dr. Seitsinger reviewed a working draft of the Strategic Plan with the BOE. He asked that they review it and jot down any thoughts before the Board Retreat on Feb 10th at PPMS in the Library. Dr. Seitsinger intends to use the Strategic Plan as an introduction to the FY19 Budget.

9. Expenditure/Projection Report

Dr. Seitsinger wants everyone to work as a group as far as budget preparation is concerned. Dr. Seitsinger, John Spang, the Leadership Team

and the BOE should all provide important input. Dr. Seitsinger then shared a power point presentation with the Board outlining his goals for the FY19 budget. He stated that the Finance Sub Committee will play an important role in building the budget. Dr. Seitsinger wants to continually improve our schools and our children's education. He would like to incorporate Science and ELA Coaches, a second ABA Teacher, a social worker and a part time Medicaid clerk. Both Cindy Luty and Deborah Burke-Grabarek expressed their support.

Sean Nugent asked that Board members submit any and all questions/comments to himself and to Dr. Seitsinger. All information will be shared later with the full board.

John Spang reviewed his expenditure/projection reports with the board. Sixty percent of the current budget is currently expended or encumbered. If we continue on our current path, John anticipates that approximately \$104,000 will be returned after June 30th.

10. **New Business: Discussion and Votes Required**

None

11. **Old Business: Discussion and Votes Required**

None

12. **Public Comment**

None

13. **Information**

14. **Adjournment**

Moved, to adjourn the meeting at 9:20PM. Burke-Grabarek/Luty. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

LEARN December meeting:

There was unanimous approval of grant applications, including

1. Title III, Part A, Subpart 1 - "English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement Consortium (funded by CSDE)
2. ESEA Federal Grant (funded by CSDE)
3. "New School Readiness Quality Enhancement Grant" (funded by New London School Readiness Council)
4. "Student Support & Academics Enrichment (SSAE) Grant" (funded by CSDE office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness)

There was no update regarding the Student Support Services Building as the November meeting was cancelled.

The legislative update noted continued budget challenges as the ECS funding is shrinking district wide.

Additional cuts may be forthcoming and per pupil funding could be impacted.

The LEARN Education Association expected the union to ratify the new contract and the LEARN Board will vote at the January meeting this Thursday.

LEARN has partnered with the National Coast Guard Association Museum to work with regional educators to define the education programs that will inspire students to become tomorrow's critical thinkers, problem solvers, innovators and future leaders.

Appointment of Blum Shapiro as the auditors for 2017 - 2018 was approved unanimously.

Executive director Dr. Eileen Howley, spoke about the agency's goals relative its mission statement:

To provide leadership for teaching and learning;

To provide high quality, innovative schools and programs;

To identify and deliver customized and cost effective programs and services; and,

To promote collaborative partnerships and regional cooperation.

LEARN Board of Directors' meeting Jan. 11, 2018

Unfortunately, Dr. Howley is out temporarily with a broken hand, so the Associate Executive Director, Kate Ericson ran the meeting this morning.

There was a superintendent's perspective presented by Brian Reas, superintendent of East Haddam. The focus of his presentation was on how the district is getting ready for and implementing STEM into their curriculum, grades K-8. While the arts have been added to the STEM initiative, their district is concentrating on authentic science and improving math. That being said, Dr. Reas stated that art is often included in the science, math, and engineering components. His opinion is that the engineering piece needs to be broadened beyond structural engineering to include other areas, such as chemical and mechanical engineering.

The focus is on the design process, a cycle of "Ask", "Imagine", "Plan", "Create", and "Improve". Every student, in a collaborative format, is given a challenge and goes through the focus process. That process looks different at each of the k-8 grade levels. Math is applied every step of the way. He emphasized that we need not just teach concepts, but give every student consistent opportunities to play with the concepts.

He also stated that the district was fortunate to have a teacher with a STEM major who is able to work with students during what is now considered a special that takes the place of the former tech class. Chromebooks are available for the students so they do not have to leave the classroom to engage in STEM instruction.

The Student Support Building Project is moving along and the committee will meet with New London Planning and Zoning on January 18th.

The LEARN Board approved proposed 2018-2019 tuition and fees which represent a zero increase for sending districts. The only exception is the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, which requires a 2.5% increase due to the makeup of the staff, most of which are on the top salary step. This increase translates into an additional \$75 for each student.

The 2018-2020 contract between LEARN and the LEARN Educational Association was unanimously ratified. There will be a reopener on salary for the 2019-2020 year of the contract.



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

Vincent A. Mustaro, Senior Staff Associate for Policy Services

PRESENTS POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

December 22, 2017

Volume 17 – Issue #13

Website Accessibility for the Disabled: As more essential information is published online, an important issue for local governments, including school districts, is the accessibility of web content to citizens whose disabilities inhibit their use of the web. Many people with disabilities use “assistive technology” to enable them to use computers and access the Internet. Blind people who cannot see computer monitors may use screen readers which are devices that speak the text that would normally appear on a monitor. People who have difficulty using a computer mouse can use voice recognition software to control their computers with verbal commands. People with other types of disabilities may use still other kinds of assistive technology, which are continually being introduced.

Improperly designed websites can create unnecessary barriers for those with disabilities, just as an improperly designed building can prevent a disabled person from entering. Features built into a web page can assist disabled individuals.

School districts are subject to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794, and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. pt. 104, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. §12131, et seq., and its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. pt. 35. These impose the obligation on school districts to make the content of their websites accessible to disabled individuals.

Jessica Scheckton, BOCES Assistant Director of Communication and Public Relations, stated, “For a website to be accessible for users it must be perceivable, operable in terms of interface and navigation, and understandable.” Simply put, website accessibility means that “people with disabilities can access the web.” This definition comes from the Web Accessibility Initiative, a project of the international standards group called the World Wide Web Consortium.

The federal Department of Justice, because of the above cited laws, has made rulemaking addressing Web accessibility a high priority. The impetus for this priority is the increasingly interconnected and dynamic nature of Web sites which allows for easy and convenient access to programs, services, and activities of public entities covered by the ADA. Individuals with disabilities are often denied equal access to the services, programs, and services of state and local governments because the public entities’ Web sites are inaccessible.

School districts that fail to comply with these obligations may find themselves being investigated by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Presently, OCR is not randomly auditing school district websites or initiating investigations without a complaint being filed against a district by a third party. Most complaints received by OCR focus on accessibility issues for individuals with hearing and visual impairments. However, barriers may also exist for

disabled individuals with other physical or cognitive disabilities. OCR has the authority under law to demand from any agency that receives federal funding the information necessary to determine whether such agency is in compliance with the anti-discrimination regulations.

The New York State Association of School Attorneys, in material published for the New York State School Boards Association, indicated that according to OCR, the most common issues are that:

Some important website content can only be accessed using a computer mouse, which means that content is not available to those who are blind, many who have low-vision, and those with disabilities affecting fine motor control.

- Parts of the website use color combinations that make text difficult or impossible for people with low vision to see.
- Videos are not accurately captioned, so they were inaccessible to people who are deaf.

The question, in light of the legal requirements, is how to make school district websites ADA compliant. An accessible website is one that meets the standards specified by law. It means that those with disabilities need to be able to use assistive technology to navigate your website. Two resources available to guide web developers and school personnel in managing websites are the Section 508 Standards and the more comprehensive resource called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Access to information is considered a civil right. Section 508 is the federal law that mandates the use of electronic accessibility while the WCAG develops interoperable technologies to guide the Web to its full potential. Section 508 and WCAG promote coherent navigation, legible presentation, complimentary colors and a consistent layout for websites.

To help disabled individuals to use any website, use is made of assistive technologies such as JAWS, ZoomText, Window-Eyes, VoiceOver or NVDA screen readers. These tools, often built into specialized web browsers, can automatically read text and describe the content of images for the blind. Other tools expand the size of text or control screen color for people with impaired vision. Other assistive technologies allow deaf users to receive a translation of an audio transmission. However, for assistive technologies to work, the web page must be created following either Section 508 or W3C standards.

It is recommended that districts seek compliance with two widely recognized international standards. The first is the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C's) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. These guidelines seek to explain the ways which agencies can insure their web content is accessible to individuals with disabilities. The other set of standards is the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (www.w3.org/WAI/intro/aria) which provides agencies with the tools necessary to ensure the accessibility of complex web interfaces (i.e., "dynamic content and advanced interface controls developed with Ajax, HTML, and JavaScript and related technologies").

Initially, districts should assess if the material on its website is currently accessible to individuals with disabilities. This should be done using the "Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility" standards. If the district is unable on its own to make such a determination, it should enlist the help of an outside vendor with the required expertise. An action plan should be developed to correct any existing online barriers to accessibility that includes a timeline for compliance. The

complexity of this issue makes it likely that districts will utilize the services of a technology provider to accomplish the required accessibility.

Further, the district should develop and adopt an accessibility policy and post a notice to persons with disabilities about how to request access to online information or functionality that is currently inaccessible.

Policy Implications

A new policy has been developed pertaining to this important topic. Policy #6141.3221, "Website Accessibility." It is available upon request from the CAFE Policy Department. The Appendix to the policy contains sample "Website Accessibility Statements." This is considered an optional policy for inclusion in the district's policy manual.

In addition, existing policy #6141.322, "Websites/Pages," and its accompanying administrative regulation have been revised to include language pertaining to website accessibility for the disabled. Copies are available. These remain optional for inclusion in a district's policy manual.

At the close of another year, we gratefully pause to again wish you a beautiful and happy Holiday Season and a New Year of peace and happiness. Whatever is beautiful, whatever is meaningful, whatever brings happiness, may it be yours this holiday season and throughout the coming year.

Thank you for your friendship, good will, loyalty, cooperation and your tireless efforts, individually and collectively, to support education and to benefit students throughout the year. The good will of those we serve remains the foundation of our success. May the happiness and good cheer of the Holiday Season be yours throughout the New Year.



CABE Policy Department

Sincerely,

The CABE Policy Department: Pam, Terry, Len and Vin



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

Vincent A. Mustaro, Senior Staff Associate for Policy Services

PRESENTS POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

January 5, 2018

Volume 17 – Issue #14

Sexual Harassment Issues in Schools: We have seen many accounts lately regarding sexual harassment by many prominent individuals, including elected government officials, candidates for public office and members of the television and motion picture industry. Unfortunately, sexual harassment is also a problem in schools, especially at the middle, junior high and high school levels, which affects the education of many students.

Sexual harassment in schools is unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the right to receive an equal educational opportunity. It is a form of sex discrimination that is prohibited by law. Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, an institution that receives federal funds must ensure that no student suffers a deprivation of her or his access to educational opportunities on the basis of sex.

Building on her remarks from September 7, 2017, regarding the protection of students from discrimination, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos released a new interim Q&A for schools on how to investigate and adjudicate allegations of campus sexual misconduct under federal law.

“This interim guidance will help schools as they work to combat sexual misconduct and will treat all students fairly,” said DeVos. “Schools must continue to confront these horrific crimes and behaviors head-on. There will be no more sweeping them under the rug. But the process also must be fair and impartial, giving everyone more confidence in its outcomes.”

The interim guidance, the newly-released Q&A on Campus Sexual Misconduct, explains the federal Education Department’s current expectations of schools. Further, the Department will continue to rely on its Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance, which was informed by a public comment process and issued in 2001, as well as the Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Harassment issued on January 25, 2006.

“In the coming months, hearing from survivors, campus administrators, parents, students and experts on sexual misconduct will be vital as we work to create a thoughtful rule that will benefit students for years to come. We also will continue to work with schools and community leaders to better address preventing sexual misconduct through education and early intervention,” DeVos added.

The Department of Education has withdrawn the Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Violence dated April 4, 2011, and the Questions and Answers on Title IX Sexual Violence dated April 29, 2014, because the Education Secretary indicated they were issued without meeting notice and comment requirements by the previous administration. DeVos indicated that the Department of Education will craft a new Title IX regulation that better serves students and schools.

FAQs on Updated Campus Sexual Misconduct Guidance:

What is the purpose of the Q&A on Campus Sexual Misconduct?

- Describes a school's responsibility to address sexual misconduct complaints
- Discusses the relationship between Title IX and the Clery Act
- Provides examples of interim measures that may be appropriate under the circumstances
- Summarizes what procedures a school should follow to adjudicate a finding of responsibility for sexual misconduct
- Describes what constitutes an "equitable" investigation
- Explains a school's obligations concerning appeals
- Clarifies appropriate evidentiary standards
- Informs schools of their responsibilities concerning notifications to parties of the outcomes of disciplinary proceedings

What are a school's obligations under Title IX regarding sexual misconduct?

- Schools must address sexual misconduct that is severe, persistent or pervasive.
- Schools must conduct a fair and impartial investigation in a timely manner.
- Title IX investigations must be led by a person free of actual or reasonably perceived conflicts of interest and biases.
- Schools must designate a Title IX Coordinator.

Do schools have flexibility to establish fair procedures?

- Schools have the discretion to apply either the preponderance of the evidence standard or the clear and convincing evidence standard.
- Schools are not required to allow appeals; however, a school may choose to allow appeals solely by the responding party or by both parties.
- Schools may permit an informal resolution, such as mediation, if it is appropriate and if all parties voluntarily agree.
- Schools should provide written notice to the responding party of the allegations, including sufficient details and with adequate time to prepare a response before any initial interview.
- OCR recommends schools provide concurrent, written notice of the outcome of disciplinary proceedings to the reporting and responding parties.

A school must adopt and publish grievance procedures that provide for a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct. Moreover, whether or not a student files a complaint of alleged sexual misconduct or otherwise asks the school to take action, where the school knows or reasonably should know of an incident of sexual misconduct, the school must take steps to understand what occurred and to respond appropriately. In particular, when sexual misconduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive as to deny or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient's school's programs or activities, a hostile environment exists and the school must respond.

OCR offers technical assistance to help schools achieve voluntary compliance with the civil rights laws it enforces and works with schools to develop approaches to preventing and addressing discrimination. A school should contact the OCR enforcement office serving its jurisdiction for technical assistance. (Telephone: 800-421-3481; Email: OCR@ed.gov)

Policy Implications: As previously stated, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. Boards of education must ensure compliance with Title IX, which includes training staff and students on sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Districts are required to have a policy pertaining to Title IX as well as published grievance procedures. The new federal interim guidance reaffirms many of the components essential to Title IX policy compliance from previously promulgated guidance. They include;

1. When the district knows or reasonably should know of an incident of sexual misconduct, it must take steps to understand what occurred and respond appropriately. This is particularly true if the misconduct is severe, persistent or pervasive and creates a hostile environment.
2. The district must designate at least one employee as its Title IX coordinator responsible for Title IX compliance.
3. The district must adopt and publish grievance procedures that provide for “prompt and equitable” resolutions of complaints.
4. The district must provide notice of Title IX grievance procedures, including the process of filing a complaint.
5. The grievance procedures apply to complaints alleging sexual misconduct carried out by “employees, other students or third parties.”
6. Investigations are to be “adequate, reliable and impartial” and should include the opportunity to present witnesses and evidence.
7. Notice of the outcomes is owed to both parties.
8. The district must take steps to prevent the recurrence of any sexual misconduct and remedy its discriminatory effects.
9. Interim measures are appropriate mechanisms to implement during an investigation. However, the district may not rely on fixed rules or operating assumptions that favor one party over another. The district may not make these measures available to only one party. Interim measures should be individualized.
10. Informal resolutions are allowable if the parties voluntarily agree and the district determines that his approach is appropriate.

There are some differences between the new interim guidance and the withdrawn guidance. They include the following:

1. The new guidance allows a school to use either a preponderance of the evidence standard or a clear and convincing standard in resolving Title IX matters. Whichever standard is used must be the same as the one used to resolve other kinds of student misconduct.

2. The new guidance removes the 60-day timeline for conducting investigations. The grievance procedures should “designate and follow a reasonably prompt time frame” for the major stages of the complaint process.
3. The new guidance now allows districts to limit the right to appeal to only the “responding party.” However, if the district chooses to allow both parties to appeal, then any appeal procedure “must be equally available to both parties.”

The description above pertaining to the similarities and differences between the new federal interim guidance and the withdrawn guidance is based upon material developed by Kyle E. Lathwell, policy consultant, published in *School Management News*, December 2017, by the Ohio School Boards Association.

A number of policies pertain to this issue. They include the following:

- #0521 – Equal Opportunity Plan/Nondiscrimination
- #0521.1 – Grievance Procedure-Title IX
- #4111.1/4211.1 – Affirmative Action: Equal Employment Opportunities
- #4118.11/4218.11 – Nondiscrimination
- #4118.111/4218.111 – Grievance Procedures Title IX
- #4118.112/4218.112 – Sexual Harassment
- #4118.113/4218.113 – Harassment
- #5131.911 – Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan
- #5145.4 – Nondiscrimination
- #5145.5 – Sexual Harassment
- #5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment
- #5145.511 – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program
- #5145.57 – Harassment
- #6121 – Nondiscrimination
- #6121.1 – Equal Education Opportunities

It is not believed necessary at the present time to make changes to the district’s Title IX policies. The Department of Education, after a rule-making process, plans to issue a new guidance. It is possible the new guidance may differ from that stated in the interim guidance. CABE’s Policy Service will continue to monitor this issue.

January 2018

CABE Liaison Newsletter



CABE Liaisons:

Please talk with your Board about these upcoming events at your next meeting.

Upcoming Professional Development

January 17, 2018
Alliance District Roundtable
9:00-11:00 am • CABE Office
Register at www.goo.gl/GneaPj

January 18, 2018
**CABE/CAPSS Convention
Committee Meeting**
8:30-10:00 am • CABE Office

Please contact Lisa Steimer at lsteimer@cabe.org
if you wish to join the committee. All Board
Members and Superintendents are welcome
to join us.

January 24, 2018
Current Legal Issues

Registration: 8:30am
Program: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
CAS, Cheshire
Program includes:
Sexual Identity • Displaced Students • Social Media

February 15, 2018
Hot Topic: School Start Times

10:00am-12:00 pm • CABE Office
Registration information coming soon!

Upcoming Advocacy Activities

Area Legislative Breakfasts

CABE Area 7
Tues., January 9, 2018
Derby High School
Register online at
www.CABE.org

CABE Area 9
Thurs., January 11, 2018
Preston Veterans
Memorial School
Register online at
www.CABE.org

CABE Area 4
Mon., January 22, 2018
Brooklyn Middle School
Register online at
www.CABE.org

CABE Area 1
Wed., January 10, 2018
EdAdvance- Litchfield
RSVP to Carol Montory
860-567-0863 x114

CABE Area 5
Mon., January 16, 2018
Sandy Hook School
RSVP to Carol Montory
860-567-0863 x114

CABE Area 2
Thurs., February 15, 2018
State Capitol- Rm 310
RSVP to Maureen DePierro
860-509-3623

February 4-6, 2018
NSBA Advocacy Institute
Marriott Marquis, Washington, DC
For more information or to register go to
<https://www.nsba.org/tags/advocacy-institute>

March 7, 2018
CABE Day on the Hill
8:30 am • The Bushnell, Hartford
Registration information coming soon!

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