

Minutes
Watertown Board of Education
Policy & Labor Subcommittee Meeting
Monday, February 23, 2015 – 6:30 p.m.
Watertown High School
Lecture Hall

Members Present: Leslie Crotty, Acting Chairman of Policy & Labor Committee
Vic Vincenzi, Committee Member
Josephine Cavallo – Rosa, Committee Member
Jim Gambardella, Chairman, Board of Education

Absent: Josephine Cavallo – Rosa, Committee Member

Others Present: Dr. Bridget Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools
Don Orsini, Board of Education
Tom Lambert, Board of Education

1. Convene Meeting

Ms. Crotty, Chairman of the Policy and Labor Committee, convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

2. Review and Discuss New Policy Recommendations: Home Schooling

Dr. Carnemolla began with explaining that they had a request back in October from a family looking to convert home school credits to Watertown High School credits. At this time, it was noted that there is no policy regarding this. She then reached out to Shipman and Goodwin and asked for advice on how we should move forward. While the particular request was handled, we needed a way to handle those in the future and move forward.

She then asked Shipman and Goodwin to put together what they thought a policy might look like and that is in front of the group now. She then pointed out that a majority of the policy would follow the current state statute. We can grant home school credit if we can determine what accreditation took place. Is it from a regionally accredited place? Is it from a program bought a store? Is it an online course? There are many variables. She then read a quote from the statute pertaining to course requirements. She went over why we would or would not accept courses are taken a from home school program. At the end, the majority of classes taken in a home school environment would not qualify for credit.

Shipman and Goodwin has advised us that if we had a policy, it should simply state that we would not grant home school credit, except for when it was done through an accredited institution. It would basically be a one lined policy. The advice is that it is redundant to have a policy because the state statute sets forth what the policy would inevitably be. So I'm here to go over this with you to discuss your concerns, discuss what you feel may be an issue going forward, and basically to say we wouldn't accept credits unless it was from an accredited institution. If we choose to go against what Shipman and Goodwin has advised, we must then adopt a board of education policy and have it structured as narrowly as possible. So at this point we have to decide do we want a policy, and if we choose not to follow our guidance, what schools would we choose to allow credits from? There would have to be a list put together.

It was noted to the question and answer session that anyone can teach homeschooling from any coursework they choose from; there is no certification required. There is no way to hold anyone accountable who home schools. The general opinion was then that there should be no credit given to anyone who does not complete coursework through Watertown High School. It was also noted that if we chose to create a policy and allow credits to be given, someone in the district then has to be the "manager" of all of the requests, research into the course credits, and where the courses were taken. Another point made was that there is no accountability, no testing, no actual way of knowing the actual coursework was done by the student or a teacher. The conversation was then held between the committee members on what colleges are looking for in regards to home schooling and it ranges from wanting transcripts from the district to testing, etc. None of which we should be held accountable for as a Board of Education.

A final decision was made to follow the advice of Shipman and Goodwin and not have a physical policy regarding this and to direct anyone who asks to the state statute.

3. Discuss the Correct Location for the Following Policies in the Policy Manual: Directory Information Notification & Volunteer Information Form

Dr. Carnemolla brought the two policies for the committee to see the wanted to discuss where they should go in the manual. The directory information notification is the form that allows parents to opt out of their information being shared. She reminded them this form is already approved, but that we need the correct place in the manual to put it. She reviewed the privacy policy with committee as well. It is being placed under directory information, under letter E, of the Confidentiality and Access to Public Education Records Policy. Ms. Crotty pointed out that there are forms in the back of this policy that most parents will never see or use until they are needed. Dr. Carnemolla reviewed why these forms would be used in what situations.

Likewise, the volunteer information form will now go into two places. It will go in the back of its policy and where we talk about visitors to the school. So the two places will be in the manual where we talk about volunteering in a school and where we talk about visitors at school. Dr. Carnemolla noted that she has a lot of work to do with the policies online, some are in more

than one place, some are redundant, some actually need to be re-looked at, but that's for a future meeting. We need time to clean up the accessibility.

4. Watertown High School Graduation Requirements

Dr. Carnemolla went over the current high school graduation requirement policy. She wanted to put it on everyone's radar that they need to be aware that when the new program of studies has approved through the Board of Education, we will need to come back to this policy and update it. It will be an easy meeting where we take the information from the new program of studies and combining it with the policy, but we will need to do that if and when the new requirement is approved.

A question was asked as to where independent studies fall into our credits and the answer was that the committee gets together and reviews a proposal to the curriculum. Much of the onus is on the student to say this is what I would like to study and then the committee will discuss how it fits into the courses. Sometimes it is approved as an elective credit and sometimes it is approved as an actual credit in a subject.

5. Adjournment

Ms. Crotty adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

She then called for a motion to adjourn.

Subject: Motion to Adjourn

Motion Presented by: Mr. Vicenzi

Motion Seconded by: Mr. Gambardella

Motion Passed

Respectfully submitted by,

Mindi Davidson

Recording Secretary