

The Regional District 13 Board of Education Policy Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback

Committee members absent: Mr. Mennone

Other board members present: Mrs. Cowan

Administration present: Dr. Leggett, Superintendent

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of agenda

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the agenda as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mr. Moore, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mrs. Petrella, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes – August 20, 2025

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2025 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes as presented: Mr. Moore, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mrs. Petrella, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

Review Policies

- **Use of Private Technology Devices by Students 5130**

Dr. Leggett recommended to amend the language in the Use of Private Technology Devices by Students to reflect the current device policy that is being implemented in the schools in the district. As of now, students are not allowed to use personal technology devices, in any school in the district, during instructional time. The high school is allowing use of technology devices during X block, passing time,

and lunch. Dr. Leggett recommended keeping the first sentence under "User Privately Owned Technological Devices," which reads, "Privately owned technological devices may not be used during instructional time," and to strike through the rest of the paragraph. Other recommended edits included the removal of cd players in the policy language.

Mrs. Dahlheimer suggested including Cell Phone Policy review on a future agenda in January or February to review how the policy is working in the schools. Dr. Leggett identified the policy is a good step moving forward, but that even use of cell phones during break or lunch in high school may need to be evaluated as it could interfere with interpersonal relationships and socialization opportunities among students. Dr. Leggett recommended a possibility of occasional phone free lunches to explore this initiative.

Mr. Roraback identified that faculty and students at his school completed a survey of the cell phone policy at the beginning of the year and that many were pleased with the policy in place, identifying it entails teaching adult behavior of self-control for when and where individuals can use their devices.

- **Restorative Practices Policy – Shipman**

Dr. Leggett recommended to move the Restorative Practice Policy, which has been in place as of July 1, 2025, to the full board for approval. This is the result of new legislation since last spring that is now required policy.

Approve Committee Structure Memo for Board Approval

Dr. Leggett reviewed the existing committees: policy, student achievement, school climate, safety, finance, and building committee. Dr. Leggett recommended using a different title for the building committee, like buildings and grounds, and to update Policy 9130 so it reflects this change.

Dr. Leggett clarified the student achievement committee, which meets four times a year, to review student data, course approval, curriculum approval. However, administration meets every month, in addition to these meetings, for student achievement.

In reviewing the policy, Mrs. Dahlheimer suggested that the language clarify the roles of the committees and its members, establishing if they are advisory or non-advisory. Dr. Leggett clarified the only committee that can vote is Building Committee, which was given special permission by the board.

Committee members also discussed community members' participation in the standing committees. Dr. Leggett identified that community members are part of every standing committee except policy and safety. Mr. Moore identified the district has a separate policy on committee member assignment. This will be updated to align with the memo proposal. Mrs. Cowan identified the importance of having community members on committees, as they share unique perspectives and insights.

The committee discussed bringing these standing committees, with their descriptions, to the board for approval and updating the information to the Board of Education website.

Develop Policy to Address Written Comments at Board Meetings

Dr. Leggett recommended the Policy to Address Written Communication at Board Meetings becomes regulation to the district's code of ethics policy. Dr. Leggett consulted with Shipman and CABE, who advised that when the Board receives correspondence from the community, the Board may state the name of the author (as long as it does not violate confidentiality) and summarize the letter, in addition to summarizing multiple correspondences regarding the same issue.

Dr. Leggett also reviewed that Shipman and CABE recommended that if an individual cannot attend public comment, that individual should give his/her statement to another individual to read so the individual is choosing someone who can articulate and/or emphasize the points he/she would like to make. Shipman and CABE do not advise board members to read public letters, as the author may not approve how a board member presented the letter during the meeting.

Mrs. Cowan recommended there should be a separate policy on board communications with staff. Dr. Leggett clarified that a policy with staff will be worked on and that the Board was waiting for staff to return to school. Additionally, a resolution policy exists between family and community members that the staff communications will be modeled after.

Committee members also discussed protocol for received communication. The recommended language states: "any board member who receives an email regarding any school district-related concern or question shall forward it to the board chair and superintendent." Mrs. Cowan questioned if all communication should be sent to the chair and superintendent, identifying that not all individuals would feel comfortable with correspondence going to the entire board.

Dr. Leggett identified that board members function as a collective, not as individuals, and individuals cannot address public questions to the Board independently. Dr. Leggett identified that the Superintendent, Chair, and Board Members should receive all communication so the full Board is informed and can respond to the public with accuracy and transparency. The discussion culminated with a reminder that individual correspondence from the public is made available to the entire Board. Additionally, Board Members must act as a collective, upholding policy and protocols that have been voted upon, despite personal thoughts, beliefs, or opinion.

Mr. Moore states the action would be to amend the code of ethics with the regulation and attach this discussion at the next Board meeting.

Discuss Use of Alternate Recording Methods of Committee Meetings

Committee Meetings are using Owl 3 camera, which projects a panoramic view and will zoom in on people who are speaking. Meetings are available in live streaming and recorded uploads. Currently, we are testing out recording meetings through Otter AI, so there will be a minimal transcription cost, if not free, in addition to paying someone to transcribe the minutes.

Review Board Meeting Time

Committee members discussed taking out the time, as the policy the meeting start time is 7:00 PM. which has not been consistent with past practice. Committee members agreed to remove the time from the policy.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning: Mr. Moore, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mrs. Petrella, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio