

**CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD DECEMBER 21, 2021 IN THE HUMISTON BOARD ROOM**

Committee Members Present: Adam Grippo, Chair; Samantha Rosenberg, Tim White

Committee Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Jeffrey Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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**I. CALL TO ORDER – 6:30 P.M.**

Mr. Grippo called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**II. Public Comment.**

None.

**III. Review Policy for a Third Reading.**

Policy #5131.911 Student/Hazing/Bullying

The Committee reviewed this policy for a third reading. There were no changes since the second reading. Mr. Grippo noted it is a more succinct and concise version of the policy. One of the most significant changes to the previous policy is the definition, which previously specified bullying as “repeated acts;” the new definition states that bullying could be a single act, if significant.

**MOTION** by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Rosenberg.

**MOVED** to bring Policy #5131.911 Student/Hazing/Bullying to the full Board for a third reading.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 3-0.

**IV. Discussion on School Safety and Security**

Superintendent Solan said that in the aftermath of the Oxford School shooting in Michigan, Mr. Grippo asked that he provide an overview of our protocols and related policies concerning student violence. Dr. Solan said he invited Tom Veivia, President of 302 Consulting Group, to speak to the Committee. Mr. Veivia has been working as a consultant in the district for a few years to provide support regarding school security and threat analysis. Mr. Veivia said he retired from the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a Supervisory Special Agent in the Behavioral Analysis Unit after a 26-year law enforcement career. He said his career has now shifted to focus on the preventative side of student violence.

Mr. Veivia said they have determined, in more than 80% of school shootings, at least one person had knowledge prior to the shooting and in half of those situations, two or more people had knowledge. In school settings, 100% of the time, the shooters will indicate or relay their

intentions to others around them. Mr. Veivia said they worked to develop the district's violence intervention program, to intercept individuals who may be on the pathway to violence.

Dr. Solan shared a presentation that outlined some of the procedures and strategies used by our district. He noted he will not be going into great detail, because some information we do not want to disclose for security purposes. However, it should be enough to get a sense of how we respond to, and philosophically how we approach, school violence and school security. Dr. Solan said we mostly focus on left of "bang" (before the incident), or incident prevention to limit the potential for "bang". He explained that the district also has very deep incident management and incident response plans, but we are really focused on incident prevention. Fortunately, we have not had any student violence threats, but incidents could be anything from natural disasters, to the passing of a staff member or student, or other elements of crisis. Post crisis, we gather our crisis intervention team. There are building-based safety and security plans and every school has a team, who meet multiple times a year, and who are dedicated to crisis intervention.

Regarding incident management, there is a coordinated response as dictated by the School Security Plan and physical security. We have adopted the ALICE program (Alert, Lockdown, Inform Counter, and Evaluate). The traditional lockdown strategy was using code language, gathering students in a room, and placing them in the furthest corner away from the door. In ALICE, we use plain language when we communicate with people, such as "there's somebody with a gun near the gym". If you are too close to the situation to get out, you lock down and barricade yourself, using anything available to secure the door. Currently, because of the pandemic, we are using an online training program, but we hope to resume in person training as soon as it is feasible.

Ms. Rosenberg asked about metal detectors, not only for school hours, but also for afterschool events. Mr. Veivia explained that the transition to metal detectors is more environmentally driven depending on the youth crime in the area. He said you move to more of a "police-state" when you start using metal detectors. Our approach is more risk assessment and intercepting individuals who are exhibiting warning behaviors. Dr. Solan added that we have spent more than \$1.5 million dollars on physical security improvements. He said we have not ignored the hardening of security, but our operational focus is on prevention.

Mr. Veivia said, generally, mental illness is not an indicator of future violence, but rather a maladaptive coping mechanism. Dr. Solan said staff might start to see a change in a student's normal social behavior. He reviewed some of the preventative strategies that are used. We teach appropriate coping strategies and skills to navigate the world, to make sure that students know where they can find supports when necessary. We focus a great deal on social-emotional learning by teaching breathing exercises and mindfulness. Dr. Solan noted that they work closely with the Police, Fire and Social Services Departments. There is anonymous reporting available at all schools where we teach students and staff that if something doesn't look or feel right, report it.

Mr. White brought up the recent student shooting in Michigan where the staff knew there was a problem, and the parents were not cooperative, and he asked how we would have handled it

differently. Dr. Solan responded that we would not have allowed a choice. We would have required that an evaluation be done; it would not have been a suggestion. When we require those evaluations, we don't just say, "Go see a psychiatrist." We catalog all of the information, require the psychiatrist to review that information and sign off that they have reviewed it, and provide some level of analysis.

Discussion continued regarding possible scenarios and how the district would respond. Mr. Grippo thanked Dr. Solan and Mr. Veivia for their presentation.

**V. Adjournment.**

On a Motion by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Adam Grippo, Policy Committee Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Jesensky, Board Clerk

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