

**CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
HELD VIRTUALLY ON MARCH 2, 2026**

Committee Members Present: Mark Ecke, Chair; Dr. Anne Harrigan; Matthew Colehour

Administrators Present: Dr. Jeffrey F. Solan, Superintendent of Schools

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:45 P.M.

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

2. Audience.

None.

3. Review Policies for a Second Reading

5111.3 Protection of Undocumented Students

Dr. Solan reported that no additional feedback had been received from board members since the prior meeting. In response to a question from a previous meeting, surrounding districts were reviewed for this policy, and it was noted that Southington, Wolcott, Wallingford, Meriden, Hamden, Bethany, Prospect, Regional School District 16, and Waterbury do not have a similar policy, while CREC, Stratford, and Meriden do. Committee members discussed whether districts with such policies may differ demographically, though it was acknowledged that the existence of these policies varies and is not clearly tied to any one factor. The committee then revisited the reasons for placing the item back on the agenda, with members noting that recent national attention to immigration enforcement in schools had renewed interest in the topic and prompted a request to the chair to reconsider the policy.

Committee discussion focused on both the purpose and possible implications of adopting the policy. There was concern about adopting a policy on a highly charged and political issue when district practice already reflects the procedures described, including limiting access to schools by outside agencies when such access would disrupt the educational environment. Dr. Solan explained the district is constitutionally required to educate all students regardless of citizenship status, and that the presence of immigration enforcement officials in schools, absent an emergency or court order, would be viewed as disruptive to the learning environment. It was also explained that current guidance generally encourages districts to limit policies to those required by law, not primarily because policies create liability by existing, but because unnecessary policies can create liability if not followed precisely.

It was also noted that codifying the district's position could help undocumented families feel safer and more secure, even if that reassurance is not explicitly communicated back to the Board. The committee also discussed revisions already made to the draft, including removal of language that would have required the board or superintendent to provide information directly to undocumented families, so that the policy remains focused on students and minimizing disruption to the educational process. Members weighed the risks of adopting a written policy against the risks of having no formal policy in place should a situation arise. Several agreed that, given the significance of the issue, the full board should have an

opportunity for broader discussion before any final action is taken. The committee agreed to advance the policy to the full board for a second reading, with the understanding that a robust discussion would take place at the upcoming business meeting before any third reading or adoption.

4. Review Policies for a Third Reading

1312.4/ 6161.13 Library Collection Development & Maintenance

Dr. Solan reviewed that the state now requires districts to adopt policies governing library collection development and maintenance, though the content reflects practices already in place in the district. The policy recognizes the professional role of library staff in selecting materials and includes consideration of varied and diverging viewpoints and age and grade-level appropriateness.

1312.5/6161.14 Library Display and Program Policy

This mandated policy complements the materials selection policy by addressing displays, posters, bulletin boards, and similar materials in library spaces. During this discussion, the committee also reviewed the district's existing complaint process for instructional and library materials under Policy 1312. The superintendent explained that concerns about instructional materials or library resources are addressed through an established process beginning with the staff member most directly involved, then moving to the principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent if necessary.

5141.5 Suicide Prevention and Intervention

This policy was last updated in 1996. It was explained that the proposed revision was developed in consultation with district administrators and legal counsel in order to update the policy and reflect current practices. The policy provides structure for how staff respond when a student has made significant threats to self or others, including referral, evaluation, and triage decisions regarding the need for further assessment. During discussion, a member asked whether board members would be considered mandated reporters under the policy. It was clarified that board members are not board employees and therefore are not included in that provision, and further discussion indicated that mandated reporting requirements generally apply within the course of one's professional role or employment. While members agreed there may be a moral obligation to report concerns about a student or adult who may be at risk, they distinguished that from the legal definition of a mandated reporter. The committee expressed support for the revised policy.

9040 Board Related Responsibilities

The committee reviewed revisions to Bylaw 9040, Board-Related Responsibilities, which stemmed from the Board's summer retreat and primarily reflect existing legal requirements, including training obligations for newly elected board members. No questions were raised on this item.

9400 Monitoring Products and Processes

Revisions to this Bylaw update the Board's Self-Evaluation process. Discussion focused on language recommending that board evaluations be followed by a retreat facilitated by CABE

or another qualified individual, consistent with best practices. Members noted that a Committee Meeting of the Whole had already been scheduled to review the Superintendent's evaluation, and no further questions were raised on the bylaw.

MOTION by Dr. Harrigan, seconded Mr. Ecke.

MOVED *that the Policy Committee bring forward policy # 5111.3 Protection of Undocumented Students for a Second Reading.*

VOTE: The Motion passed 3-0.

MOTION by Mr. Colehour, seconded by Dr. Harrigan.

MOVED *that the Policy Committee bring forward Policies 1312.4/6161.13 Library Collection Development & Maintenance; 1312.5/6161.14 Library Display and Program Policy; 5141.5 Suicide Prevention and Intervention; Bylaw 9040 Board Related Responsibilities; and 9400 Monitoring Products and Processes for a third reading.*

VOTE: The Motion passed 3-0.

5. **Adjournment.**

Dr. Solan noted the April Meeting will be held on April 13th because of April break. Mr. Colehour noted he is not available on that evening. The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Ecke, Policy Committee Chair

Attest: _____
Carol Jesensky, Board Clerk

Filed with the Cheshire Town Clerk's Office on 3/17/2026.