

**Trumbull Public Schools**  
**Trumbull Committee**  
**Policy Advisory Committee**  
Regular Meeting – April 9, 2014  
Long Hill Administration Building Assembly Room

The Trumbull Public School’s Policy Advisory Committee convened in the Long Hill Administration Building for a Regular Meeting.

Members present:

Dawn Cantafio, Co-Chairperson  
Dr. Linda Paslov, Central Office Administration  
Rosemary Seaman, BOE member  
Susan LaFrance, BOE member  
Patricia Frillici, TAA Rep  
Nancy Fisher, Member at Large  
Vicki Tesoro, Member at Large  
Rita Ciarmella, Administrative Assistant  
Christian DeGenova, Student Representative

Members absent:

Jennifer Mottolese, PTA Rep  
Teresa Carter, PTA Rep  
Nicholas Banks, TEA Representative  
Ian Matz, Student Representative

Guests: Deborah Herbst, Board Chair  
Nick Caruso, CAFE  
Coleen Figliuzzi, School Nursing Supervisor

Agenda Item I—Preliminary Business

A. The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. Board Chair Mrs. Herbst introduced Nick Caruso, Senior Staff Associate for Field Services for the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, who recently facilitated a retreat for the Board. Mrs. Herbst explained that during the Board’s retreat, it became evident that the Board is weak in the area of policy development and this was an area the Board needed to address. Mr. Caruso explained the roles and responsibilities of Boards of Education in relation to policy. It was noted that most districts’ subcommittees on policy include several members of the Board and a central office administrator as it is a subcommittee of the Board of Education. This committee would write the policy and the Superintendent or his/her designee would draft the regulations. In instances where it is a specialized area, i.e. food allergy management plan, someone with expertise in that field would be asked to assist with policy development. Mr. Caruso commented that the make-up of Trumbull’s Policy Advisory Committee was unique and it was noted that the Board felt the current process is flawed. Mrs. Herbst conveyed the Board’s responsibility is for the “what” of policy and the Superintendent’s role is for the “how” policy is implemented. The Superintendent or his/her designee would work with the PAC Committee to write policy. Their meetings would be warned with a letter to the Town Clerk, along with an agenda, and would be open to the public. It was noted that anyone attending the meeting could ask questions/make comments before or after the meeting with no input taken during the meeting. Considerable discussion ensued regarding how changes to Policy Advisory Committee and Policy on Policy policies were presented to the Committee at their meeting on March 12, 2014. Several PAC members commented that the Committee was told they were violating State Statute and changes needed to be made quickly and had support of the full Board. Mrs. Cantafio commented that the

controversy was with the way it was presented to the Committee as members did not know these changes were coming and was not explained well. She further commented that in the past there was never a problem with the way policies are reviewed and that 4 years ago, a representative from CAFE and the Board's attorney had conducted a workshop for the members of PAC. Mrs. Tesoro commented that previous Boards had applauded the work of this Committee and felt as if the Committee is being fired and told they have done a lousy job. Several PAC members commented that the Committee never wrote or reviewed policies until they were asked by administration to do so. They further commented that input was always sought from CAFE, area districts' policies, and administration including the Superintendent, principals, Board attorney when necessary, and other staff members associated with the policy, i.e. Transportation Manager on bus policy. The PAC committee did not arbitrarily initiate any policy. Further discussion ensued regarding the work of the Committee and its membership and the proposed changes. Mrs. Seaman apologized to Committee members saying it was not her intention to make them feel that their work was not valued. She also commented that policy and PAC were discussed at the Board retreat and the BOE agreed to the suggested changes. More discussion followed and Mrs. Herbst, on behalf of the Board, reiterated that the responsibility of policy making rests with the Board of Education. It was noted that the Committee will be made up of 3 Board members and the Superintendent's designee, Dr. Linda Paslov, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments. They will meet to review and revise policy. The meetings will be posted and open to the public. Mrs. Fisher commented that the PAC committee used to have a 20-hour per week year round secretary assigned just to policy and now has an assistant, while doing a great job, with limited time to spend on policy. She also commented that the work of 10-12 committee members was now being placed on Dr. Paslov. Mrs. Herbst commented that Dr. Paslov is well compensated for her duties. Several Committee members commented that the current make up of the Committee worked well with representation from all levels, BOE, administration, PTSA and community members. Mrs. Herbst reminded the Committee that the control of policy rests with the BOE. Mrs. LaFrance commented that the core committee of BOE members and Dr. Paslov will meet and invite parents or others with expertise on what is being discussed when needed. The public is welcome to attend meetings as observers and the Committee will decide when they want public comment. At this time, Public Comment was taken from parents/community members who were in attendance. They asked questions regarding who will be members of the Committee and why the sudden change in committee membership. Parent Cindy Katske commented on the proposed changes to the Committee, noting the PTSA Council members represent the interests of all students and their families. She also conveyed that community members are usually parents of former students who have volunteered in schools and have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. Douglas Sutherland asked several times for a reason for the sudden change in the way policy is being handled and Mrs. Herbst conveyed that the control of policy rests with the Board of Education as it is their primary responsibility.

- B. Correspondence—Mrs. Ciarmella read an email from PAC member Jennifer Mottolese (attached) and an email addressed to PAC and the Board from Lainie McHugh, parent and member of PTSA (attached).
- C. Public Participation—see comments under agenda item A.

#### Agenda Item II—Consent Agenda

- A. Approval/Minutes 3/12/14 meeting—Mrs. Tesoro commented that the minutes do not accurately reflect the conversation that took place at the 3/12/14 meeting and discussion ensued. It was moved (Seaman) seconded (Tesoro) to approve the minutes with the following change: remove the sentence in agenda item IV-B, Policy on Policy, “They shared that it was the consensus of the Board to revise the membership of the PAC Committee and its charge as soon as possible.” And replace with “They stated the policies were on the fast track to move forward as soon as possible with full Board support.” 7 in favor (Cantafio, DeGenova, Fisher, Frillici, Paslov, Seaman, Tesoro) 1 abstention(LaFrance). Motion passes.

#### Agenda Item III—Reports

- A. Board Meetings—Mrs. Ciarmella conveyed the Board met on March 25, 2014 for a regular meeting where Safety Patrol was presented for a second reading and approved. The Board also met on April 8, 2014 for a regular meeting where the Elementary Enrollment Study was reviewed.
- B. Upcoming Board of Education meetings—Mrs. Ciarmella shared that the Board will meet on May 6 and 20, 2014. She also noted that the Board may have a special meeting towards the end of April after the Town Council votes on the 2014-15 budget.

#### Agenda Item IV—Policy Review/Discussion

- A. Nick Caruso—Discussed under Agenda Item I, A.
- B. Life-threatening Food Allergies (new policy)—Mrs. Figliuzzi conveyed that she met and presented the policy to elementary and middle principals last week. She also commented that the most recent changes made to the policy were from input she received from Dr. Rosen who has expertise with food allergies. She shared that she is awaiting input from principals which she will incorporate into the policy. Discussion ensued regarding additional information needed for policy including input from Food Services Director Betty Sinko and Plant Operations Supervisor Steve Kennedy. Mrs. LaFrance commented that she would like to meet with Mrs. Figliuzzi to review policy and asked for a timeline for approval of policy so it can be posted to the TPS website. This policy is continued for discussion at the next meeting.
- C. Policy Advisory Committee—on hold.
- D. Policy on Policy—on hold.

#### Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.