

## **Policy Committee Meeting**

Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:00 AM

484-369-0510 PIN: 399 324 590#, 24 School Road, Weston, CT 06883-1623

### **I. Call to Order**

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

### **III. Discussion of policies, regulations, and bylaws**

- A. Policy and Regulation 6154, Homework/Makeup Work
- B. COVID-19 Update - Ongoing Policy Implications
- C. Policy Regulation 1312, Public Complaints
- D. Policy and Regulation 5135, Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet

### **IV. Discussion of policies, regulations, and bylaws in future meetings**

- A. IDEA, Alternative Assessments (New)
- B. New Directives from the State (TBD)

### **V. Adjourn**

## **Policy Committee Meeting**

April 1, 2020 - Via Google Hangout

### Members Present:

Melissa Walker

Hillary Koyner

Taffy Miller

### **1. Call to Order**

Melissa Walker called the meeting to order at 9:03am. In attendance, William McKersie, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools, Kenneth Craw, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of C&I, Jen Ryan, HR Specialist

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

Discussion:

March minutes were approved.

### **3. Discussion of policies, regulations, and bylaws**

#### **3.A. Discussion of policies and regulations applicable to planning for potential effects of COVID-19**

Discussion: Dr. McKersie began the meeting by asking that agenda item COVID-19, remain the lead item for the next few policy meetings. Upcoming policies and regulations that relate to COVID-19 that may need committee review are academic issues and graduation requirements. These issues will be discussed in the curriculum committee first, then if necessary come to policy.

The Green Cleaning policy was then discussed. The policy will need to be updated to allow some flexibility in extending the timeline for staff to bring in their own cleaning supplies, once schools re-open. The Green Cleaning policy will be brought to the May policy meeting with revised language.

The committee then discussed online privacy and firewall issues, now that distance learning is up and running for students. The committee agreed that monitoring student access needs to be a partnership with families and the district. Dr. McKersie will be talking to other districts to see how they are handling the issue. Dr. Craw will discuss with Craig Tunks, what is already in place in Weston.

Other policies that may need to be updated as the district moves through this new distance learning experience are:

Homebound Student (6173), Students Afflicted with Communicable Disease (5141.22) and a review of Admission/Placement (5111) as the need and requests for student to repeat this school year may become a larger issue for 2020-2021.

### **Discussion of policies, regulations, and bylaws in future meetings**

Discussion: The committee then laid out their plan for the next few months of the school year. It was decided that sustainability would be discussed in the fall, allowing ample time to review and research the topic. Moving forward, the agenda will list five (5) upcoming policies and/or regulations to be discussed, updated, or reviewed. For the May meeting the following will be brought to the

committee, the highlighted ones to be reviewed first, the others updated if there is any new information:

- Policy and Regulation 1312, Public Complaints
- Policy and Regulation 5135, Student Use of the District's Computer systems and Internet
- IDEA, Alternative Assessments (New)
- Policy and Regulation 6154, Homework/Makeup Work
- New Directives from the State (TBD)

**5. Adjourn** 10:02am

InstructionHomework

The Weston Board of Education recognizes the value of home study and considers it an integral part of the teaching program.

Home study shall afford an opportunity for increased self-reliance and growth in responsibility. It may be used to improve the child's ability to plan and organize and as an aid in developing good, independent work habits.

It may be assigned to strengthen and expand classroom learning or to provide essential practice in needed skills or to remedy specific weaknesses. Home study shall never be given as a penalty, as a disciplinary measure nor as "busy" work. Homework shall count as part of a final grade.

The faculty shall implement the above policy and shall issue guidelines outlining the responsibility of the teachers, the parents, and the students with respect to home study.

Policy adopted: December 6, 1984

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Weston, Connecticut

## Instruction

## Homework

### Definition

Homework is the responsibility of the student and should reflect their work. Homework is any short or long-term assignment for study or preparation done outside the classroom which supports and extends student learning. Its primary purposes include reinforcement, remediation, enrichment, development of study habits and exploration of resources in libraries, on the Internet, at home or in the community.

### Philosophy

Homework is a necessary and integral part of the instructional program and learning process that allows students to follow through on their personal commitment to academic work. Through meaningful assignments, students develop constructive attitudes and sharpen useful skills.

The regular practice of homework requires self-discipline and enables students to function as individuals. Assignments offer opportunities for problem solving and increased learning. Students who benefit most from formal education are those who approach it with curiosity, varied interests, and a willingness to work hard.

Homework is an essential part of the individual's learning and development. Yet it is recognized that time must also be allotted for physical and social recreation. Teacher feedback on the quality of homework shall be provided on a regular basis as appropriate to the grade and area. Homework activities, differentiated as needed, are designed to accommodate students with learning and organizational difficulties or those with other special needs.

### Parameters

- Activities should be a natural extension of the learning experience to develop initiative and responsibility and to encourage application.
- Activities should supplement and enrich classroom learning, improve research and study skills, and teach students to organize time.
- Long-term project activities are essential, and should clearly be defined. The emphasis of the assignment is to demonstrate a student's level of learning.
- Parents should not be involved in projects, or any other homework, unless specified by teachers. Teachers, in turn, are strongly urged to limit the requests for parental involvement.
- Activities outside the classroom should foster communication and cooperation between home and school.

- Activities should vary in format: long-term, independent, and overnight homework should be assigned.
- Activities should increase in complexity and duration with the maturity and grade level of the student.
- Activities should be designed to help students actively process and construct concepts.
- Students should be encouraged to study new materials daily and to review previously-learned skills and materials regularly.
- An effort should be made to coordinate the student's workload and evenly distribute assignments throughout the week.
- Meaningful feedback to the student on the quality of homework shall be provided on a regular basis.
- Time guidelines for daily homework should be adjusted to recognize the time needed to complete long-term projects.
- Activities should provide opportunities for students to be successful by allowing flexibility in format and presentation.
- Assignments for students with a 504 Plan or an IEP will be consistent with the goals of the student's plan.

#### Special Circumstances

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Tests/quizzes should not be given and projects and homework assignments should not be due immediately following religious holidays recognized by the school calendar. In addition, these guidelines should be followed when the school is notified in writing by a parent/guardian of a specific religious observance for his/her child.

SCHOOL CALENDAR VACATIONS: During the school year at the elementary and middle school levels, homework will not be due immediately following the return from a recognized school calendar vacation. This restriction may not apply to students who are in accelerated programs or TAG.

ILLNESS: Homework requests for multi-day absences for illness will be honored. Homework may be picked up through the main office at the end of the day following the request. For a one-day absence, students should call classmates and rely on other systems designated by the school, i.e. homework hotline, web sites. When absences are extended or chronic, parents should contact the school nurse.

OTHER ABSENCES: Parents should notify teachers of an impending absence using the procedures outlined in the school's student handbook. Depending upon the student and the course, the teacher may feel it essential to give the student assignments to be completed during the absence or upon his/her return. In these instances, the parents are asked to ensure that assigned work is completed and handed in upon return or when

required by the teacher. Such work will count as part of the final grade. After a prolonged absence, however, it may be advisable to seek private tutorial help at the parents' expense. Make-up privileges do not apply when a student cuts class.

### Time Guidelines

Of all the activities in which students are engaged after school hours, homework assignments need to be the highest priority. The need to establish time parameters was driven by the realization that Weston maintains high standards for student achievement and high expectations for the quality of instruction and the meaningfulness of homework assignments. The following guidelines represent an average nightly figure rather than a minimum or maximum. It should be understood that these guidelines are based on the time it takes the "average" student to complete his/her work. Students in accelerated programs, AP courses, or TAG will often exceed these guidelines due to the requirements of the course work.

Students should ideally read nightly, in addition to homework assignments. To help establish the reading habit, parents or older brothers or sisters are encouraged to read to children in the primary grades.

GRADE	AVERAGE TIME FOR HOMEWORK	TIME FOR READING
Kindergarten	Occasional, brief activities which meet specific individual needs	Up to 20 minutes
One	Occasional, brief activities which meet specific individual needs	Up to 20 minutes
Two	20 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Three	30 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Four	30-40 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Five	40-60 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Six	60-75 minutes	Up to 30 minutes
Seven	60-90 minutes	Up to 30 minutes
Eight	60-120 minutes	Up to 30 minutes
Nine - Twelve	35-45 minutes per academic course (averaging 2-3 hours nightly)	Up to 30 minutes

6154(d)

Ref: 6155, Differentiation and Grouping  
Parent/Student Handbook

Regulation adopted: December 6, 1984  
Regulation revised: June 22, 2000

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Weston, Connecticut

Instruction

6154

Homework

The Weston Board of Education recognizes the value of homework and considers it an integral part of the educational process.

Homework may be assigned to:

- Strengthen and expand classroom learning;
- Reinforce content and allow the opportunity to practice essential skills;
- Develop good work habits and routines; and,
- Develop organizational, executive functioning and time management skills.

The administration shall issue guidelines outlining the responsibility of teachers, parents and students with respect to homework. Guidelines should be aligned with current research and best practices in education. Further, the guidelines should be developmentally appropriate and align with the district's commitment to promoting healthy learning environments.

## **Weston Public Schools**

### **Report on K-12 Homework Practices**

#### **Draft - June 12, 2019**

#### **Background**

The district is conducting a review of its Homework Policy (6154) and Regulations. The current policy was adopted in 1984, while the regulations were last revised in 2000. Given the district's commitment to enhancing healthy learning environments, it is timely to examine this policy. Several neighboring districts have examined or are conducting similar review processes on their homework policies.

During the 2017-18 school year, the administration documented each school's [homework practices](#) and presented this information to the Board of Education's Curriculum Committee on June 9, 2017. One of the key questions examined in this initial review was whether or not teachers were aligned across their grade level on the amount and type of homework assigned. Where inconsistencies were identified, principals worked with their grade level teams and departments to monitor implementation of the district policy. There was a noted improvement during the 2018-19 school year as a result of these management efforts.

Following this initial ground work, the administration developed an [action plan](#) for conducting a qualitative review of the district's homework practices. The action plan was presented to the BOE's Curriculum Committee on January 16, 2019, and it was refined based on that discussion. In the plan, several steps were listed for obtaining feedback from the various stakeholders—students, teachers and parents.

#### **Data Collection**

The primary protocol of data collection to elicit student, parent and teacher feedback was through focus groups using a semi-structured interview protocol. The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction led the student and parent focus groups in collaboration with the school principals. Four parent focus groups (one per school) and a total of six student focus groups ranging from grades 3-12 were held. In addition, school principals met with their leadership teams and respective faculties to garner their feedback regarding current practices.

#### **Focus Group Results**

The following section highlights the focus group responses to the interview questions. These are not direct quotes, rather the data is a synthesis of the most common responses and sentiments. The data is organized around several themes that emerged in the responses (e.g. Purpose of HW, Meaningful HW).

##### *Purpose of Homework*

- Reinforces content and allows the opportunity to practice the skills learned in class.
- Homework is good training and preparation and teaches students the work ethic that they need.

- At the younger ages, homework gets them into good habits and routines to prepare them for the next level.
- Helps students build the organizational and executive functioning skills that they need—time management.
- It should help the student learn more about the subject; it should not be busy work or too repetitive.
- Students indicated that homework helps them see if they can do the work on their own without the teacher's assistance.
- Homework should not be used as a tool for students to have to teach oneself the content.
- Homework helps students prepare for assessments.

### *Meaningful Homework*

- Consistent with the research on homework, there are benefits to independently reading on a regular basis. This was a common theme particularly in the lower schools.
- When homework reflects what has been done in class, or when it targets student needs, it is more meaningful.
- Homework is more meaningful when there are options and choice for students.
- Use of technology for homework should be balanced.
- Examples of meaningful homework highlighted by the participants:
  - Book talks, Quizlets, online math practice, grammar homework, maintenance math, challenge work, science homework, presentation assignment on the Revolutionary War.
- Students like projects where they need to be creative.

### *Counterproductive Homework*

- The greatest stress reported at the high school regarding homework is with respect to Spanish homework, especially when it is not posted until late at night and it's due the next day.
- When students don't have clear directions regarding homework, it creates stress for students.
- Students feel frustrated when homework is not reviewed or given feedback on it.
- Research indicates that there are diminishing returns after students have spent two hours on homework in the evening.
- Assignments due at midnight encourage kids to procrastinate and stay up late.
- Students indicated that it is stressful having homework due on the same day that a project is due.
- Group projects are stressful when roles are not clearly defined or when group members don't pull their weight.

### *Quantity and Frequency of Homework*

- Responses to this question were child dependent and varied widely from not enough homework to too much.

- Parents expressed concern about there being more than two quizzes/tests on a particular day. The middle school has a team calendar of assignments to guard against this.
- Sometimes there are too many assignments in one night and not enough on other nights; students indicated that homework could be spaced out better.
- Students indicated that their teachers are accommodating and move the date of a test when they know there are assessments in other subjects.
- Students are using the Extended Learning Time (ELT) at WMS to get their homework done.
- Students report there is sometimes too much homework in one night.
- Parents of WMS students reported that there is not enough homework being done at home as a result of students completing it during ELT. Parents expressed concern that this will make the transition to ninth grade more challenging.
- Students indicated that too many assignments are due on the Tuesday or Wednesday following school breaks.

*Perceptions of Teacher Responsibilities:*

- Set clear and explicit instructions for homework assignments.
- Provide feedback on homework for learning, but not for assigning a grade to the assignment.
- Teachers should post grades on PowerSchool in a timely manner and more frequently.
- Provide fair expectations on the timing of homework.
- Be mindful of student stress.
- Provide more communication on the scheduling of tests, quizzes and projects.
- Teachers need to collaborate with each other to coordinate and spread out the assignments.
- Teachers should provide enough time to complete the assignment; the assignment should be assigned prior to leaving school that day. It's very stressful if a teacher assigns homework in the evening that is due the next day.
- Provide checkpoints for long-term assignments.
- Parents would like to see more feedback provided on the homework/assessments.
- There were concerns raised about tests not being returned to students so parents can see how students are performing.

*Perceptions of Student Responsibilities:*

- Homework should be the student's own work.
- Students are responsible for getting their work completed and handed in on time.
- Set a daily routine for completing homework to establish good work habits.
- Make homework a priority and budget time around other activities.
- Inform the teacher if the assignment is too difficult or takes too long to complete.

*Perceptions of Parent Responsibilities:*

- Parent involvement should be minimal unless the student is struggling.
- Parents should give guidance only, if needed.
- Parents should set time aside for homework/reading around activities.
- Guide students in establishing good work habits by having a time and place set aside at home to complete homework.
- Involvement depends on the child. Some students may need more structure and reminders than others.

*Where/When Students Complete their Homework*

- The answer to this question varied widely based on the student's activity schedule.

*WHS Mid-term and Final Exams*

- The high school has established two blackout days prior to the first day of exams in order for students to have time dedicated to studying without any new content being delivered on these days.
- However, concerns have been made that assessments (quizzes, projects) are being assigned on these blackout days.
- Some students have requested a blackout week to provide more opportunity to focus on preparing for exams.
- Students would like teachers to spend more time reviewing for finals with them.

**Proposed Next Steps**

*Summer 2019*

- Craft the updated Homework Policy and Regulations for review by the Policy Committee.

*September 2019*

- Bring the updated Policy to the Policy Committee for review.
- Principals to review the drafts with their leadership teams for any additional feedback.
- Begin piloting anticipated changes to the Policy with the start of the school year.
- Communicate these changes to families at Back to School Nights.

*October 2019*

- Place Homework Policy and Regulations on the BOE agenda for a first read.

*November 2019*

- Place Homework Policy and Regulations on the BOE agenda for a second read.
- Fully implement the Policy following Board adoption.

*Spring 2020*

- Provide update on the implementation of the new Homework Policy and Regulations at a Curriculum Committee meeting.

Instruction

6154(a)

Homework

**Elementary and Intermediate Schools**

The primary focus of homework at the K-5 level is to promote foundational skills in reading and math. Through independent or assigned reading, students will build their decoding, fluency and comprehension skills by establishing a regular routine of reading at home. In addition to their reading, students in grades 2-5 are assigned math homework to reinforce math facts and skills they have learned in class. Occasionally, students are assigned other meaningful homework activities.

Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday at the K-5 level. No homework is assigned over holidays, weekends and school vacations that will be due the day school resumes.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Time for Reading</b>	<b>Average Daily Time for HW</b>	<b>Total Time</b>
Kindergarten	20 minutes (may be read to)	Optional brief activity or game	20 minutes
Grade 1	20 minutes (may be read to)	Periodic brief activity or game	20 minutes
Grade 2	20 minutes	Weekly math maintenance activity	25 minute
Grade 3	20 minutes	Up to 10 minutes	30 minutes
Grade 4	20 minutes	Up to 20 minutes	40 minutes*
Grade 5	20 minutes	Up to 30 minutes	50 minutes*

\*Students in grades 4 and 5 playing an instrument will need to set time aside to practice playing their instrument.

**Students will:**

- Build greater independence in completing homework as they progress through grades K-5.
- Establish a reading life through a regular routine of reading at home.

**Teachers will:**

- Assign purposeful and meaningful homework.
- Explain the purpose of homework to their students.
- Adhere to the guidelines set forth above for the total amount of time allotted for homework, understanding that some students take longer than others to complete assignments.

**Parents will:**

- Establish a time and place for completing homework.
- Encourage students to give their best effort on homework.
- Monitor homework completion.
- Contact the teacher if there are concerns about homework or the time it takes for the child to complete assignments.

**Middle School**

At the middle school, there is a continued commitment to reading daily through independent or assigned reading. In addition, middle school students are assigned meaningful homework in their classes to extend their learning. The middle school teaming model establishes time for teachers to meet to coordinate homework assignments, projects, tests, and quizzes in order to stay within the total daily time allotment guidelines listed below.

For middle school students, no homework is assigned over holidays and school vacations that will be due the day school resumes.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Time for Reading</b>	<b>Average Daily Time for HW</b>	<b>Total</b>
Grade 6	20 minutes	Up to 40 minutes	60 minutes*
Grade 7	20 minutes	Up to 50 minutes	70 minutes*
Grade 8	20 minutes	Up to 60 minutes	80 minutes*

\*Students in grades 6 through 8 playing an instrument will need to set time aside to practice playing their instrument.

**Student will:**

- Keep track of their assignments in a systematic way.
- Manage their time effectively to complete short-term and long-term assignments.
- Advocate for their individual needs and ask for help when necessary.
- Complete homework after absences within a reasonable and agreed upon amount of time with the classroom teacher.

**Teacher will:**

- Assign purposeful and meaningful homework with clear due dates.
- Explain the purpose of homework to their students.
- Clarify the type of feedback and when/how feedback will be communicated to the student.
- Provide students with strategies and guidance for how to study for quizzes and tests.
- Post assignments online with adequate notice for completion.
- Coordinate the timing of assessments (e.g. quizzes, tests) with other teachers on the team and post on the team calendar.
- Adhere to the guidelines set forth above for the total amount of time allotted for homework understanding that some students take longer than others to complete assignments.

**Parent will:**

- Establish a time and place for completing homework.
- Monitor homework completion
- Encourage students to give their best effort on homework.
- Support students with managing make up work after absences.
- Encourage students to contact their teacher if they are having difficulty.
- Contact the teacher if there are concerns about homework or the time it takes for the child to complete assignments.

**High School**

High school students should expect to spend an average of two hours doing homework nightly. A student's course of study will determine the amount of time the student spends on homework each day. Students should consider that taking a course of study consisting of multiple advanced level courses could increase their homework beyond two hours.

For high school students, no homework is assigned over holidays and school vacations that will be due the day school resumes.

**Student will:**

- Keep track of their assignments in a systematic way.
- Manage their time effectively to complete short-term and long-term assignments.
- Advocate for their individual needs and ask for help when necessary.
- Complete homework after absences within a reasonable and agreed upon amount of time with the classroom teacher.

**Teacher will:**

- Assign purposeful and meaningful homework with clear due dates.
- Explain the purpose of homework to their students.
- Clarify the type of feedback and when/how feedback will be communicated to the student.
- Provide students with strategies and guidance for how to study for quizzes and tests.
- Post assignments online with adequate time for completion.
- Adhere to the guidelines set forth above for the total amount of time allotted for homework understanding that some students take longer than others to complete assignments.

**Parent will:**

- Provide a supportive environment for completing homework.
- Encourage students to give their best effort on homework.
- Support students with managing make up work after absences.
- Encourage students to contact their teacher if they are having difficulty.
- Contact the teacher if there are concerns about homework or the time it takes for the child to complete assignments.

Regulation adopted: December 6, 1984

Regulation revised: June 22, 2000

Regulation revised:

## Community Relations

### Public Complaints

Weston Board of Education (“Board”) members shall refer parents, students, other citizens, and school personnel making complaints about the schools to the Superintendent of Schools who will then refer the complainant to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved. Persons making complaints should be made aware of the proper channels of communication and the process of requesting an appeal. The decision of a principal regarding a complaint must reference this Policy and the related Regulations. Any request for an appeal from the decision of a principal to the Superintendent or of the Superintendent to the Board shall be in writing and signed. Not all decisions of principals and/or the Superintendent are proper subjects of appeal.

This Policy and the related Regulations do not apply to complaints that are subject to a statutory process or a process governed by contract (e.g., residency, special education, student discipline, employee discipline, grievances, collective bargaining).

#### **I. Procedure for Appeal to the Superintendent**

A request to appeal a decision by a principal may be made to the Superintendent. A request to appeal a principal’s decision must be made within **fifteen (15) ~~ten (10)~~** school days of the date of the principal’s decision. The Superintendent shall have the discretion whether to hear such an appeal.

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#### **II. Procedure for Appeal to Board of Education**

A. A request to appeal the decision of the Superintendent may be made to the Board. The Board shall have the discretion whether to hear such an appeal. Examples of decisions by the Superintendent that are not proper subjects of appeal include, but are not limited to:

1. A decision by the Superintendent not to hear an appeal
2. Teacher assignment and/or grade level placement
3. Academic grades and course placement
4. Athletic participation and athletic disciplinary decisions
5. Co-curricular participation and co-curricular disciplinary decisions

B. A request to appeal the decision of the Superintendent to the Board must be made within **fifteen (15) ~~ten (10)~~** school days of the date of the Superintendent’s decision. If a timely appeal is made, the following procedure will be followed:

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**REDLINED VERSION for CONSIDERATION OF REVISIONS**  
**May 19, 2020**

1. If the appeal of the decision of the Superintendent substantially relates to one of the subjects listed in Section (A) above, the Chairperson of the Board shall decline consideration of the appeal without further Board involvement.
2. In the event that the Chairperson does not decline consideration of the appeal as provided in Section B(1) above, at its next regular meeting, or in a special meeting, the Board shall vote whether to hear the appeal of the Superintendent's decision. Deliberation regarding whether to hear an appeal may be held in executive session if permitted by law.
- C. In the event that the Board decides to hear the appeal, it shall follow the procedure below:
  1. The Board will allow the complainant to present his/her appeal. The Board may elect to hold the hearing in executive session if permitted by law. The Board will also permit the Superintendent, or his/her designee, an opportunity to present the reasons for the Superintendent's decision. The Chairperson of the Board shall have the right to limit the time and scope of the presentations taking into consideration the nature of the complaint.
  2. If permitted by law, the Board may deliberate in executive session regarding the appeal and resume public session in order to vote on whether to grant the appeal.
  3. Nothing herein shall require the Board to hear testimony or oral argument regarding any appeal brought under this Policy. Rather, the Board may elect to consider an appeal based solely on the written submission of the complainant(s) and the Superintendent or his/her designee.

**Challenged Material**

A procedure for processing and responding to criticism of approved materials shall be established and set forth in the Regulations. This procedure shall include a formal, signed complaint of standard format and an appointed committee to reevaluate the material in question.

In all cases, the decision to retain or reject shall be made on the basis of whether the material has a legitimate pedagogical basis. Considerations for whether the material has a legitimate pedagogical basis include, but are not limited to, whether the circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the material has literary or special value. Factual material shall be included in all instructional material collections.

(cf. 1220 – Citizens' Advisory Committees)

(cf. 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression)

REDLINED VERSION for CONSIDERATION OF REVISIONS  
May 19, 2020

(cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 – Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference:

Conn. Gen. Statutes Section 10-229

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988)

Policy adopted: December 4, 1989  
Revised: October 18, 2010  
May 15, 2017

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Weston, Connecticut

R 1312

Community Relations

Public Complaints

I. Complaints Not Related to Personnel

Constructive criticism of the schools is welcome through whatever medium on the assumption that it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of educational program and to equip the school to perform its task more effectively.

Specific complaints about the conduct of the schools may originate with school personnel, students, parents, and other citizens. Such complaints can be resolved most expeditiously if they are taken first to the appropriate staff member or faculty leader, and then the administrator immediately in charge of the area in which the complaint arose. A complainant may request an appeal of the decision of a principal to the Superintendent subject to the provisions of Policy 1312 and this Regulation. Complaints regarding school employees shall be addressed using the procedures described under "School Personnel" below.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, the complaint shall be referred to the Superintendent who will direct the complaint to the appropriate school personnel.

While the Board will consider constructive criticism and may hear an appeal from a decision by the Superintendent, the Board protects staff insofar as possible from anonymous, unreasonable, or ill-considered complaints.

A request to appeal a decision by a principal may be made to the Superintendent. Any request to appeal to the Superintendent must be in writing, signed by the Complainant, and made within ~~five~~ fifteen (15) school days of the decision of the principal. The Superintendent shall have the discretion whether to hear such an appeal. The Superintendent's decision on the merits of the appeal or his/her decision not to hear such appeal, will be made within ~~five~~ fifteen (15) schools days of his/her receipt of such appeal. The Superintendent may extend the time to issue his/her decision by up to an additional ~~five~~ fifteen (15) school days.

A request to appeal a decision of the Superintendent must be made to the Board within ~~five~~ fifteen (15) school days of the Superintendent's decision. The Board shall have the

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**REDLINED VERSION for CONSIDERATION OF REVISIONS**  
**May 19, 2020**

discretion whether to hear such an appeal. The Board's appeal procedure is described in Policy 1312, Article II.

**II. Complaints Related to School Personnel**

**A. Informal Level**

If a complaint arises against a specific employee, the complainant shall first attempt to resolve the complaint on an informal level by directly contacting the specific employee involved. If the complainant is uncomfortable with directly contacting the employee, or if the nature of the complaint is of an extremely serious nature, the building administrator shall be brought into the informal meeting. A sincere attempt shall be made to resolve all complaints expeditiously at this informal level. However, should resolution not be possible or the nature of the complaint is extremely serious, the complaint shall advance to the formal level.

**B. Formal Level**

At the formal level, the administrator (building ~~principal, Director~~ of Pupil Services, or other administrator assigned by the Superintendent) may, in his or her discretion, as directed by the Superintendent, or as required by applicable law, a collective bargaining agreement, or employment contract, conduct an investigation of the complaint. ~~If a specific employee is involved in a formal investigation, that employee shall be advised of the nature of the complaint and shall be given every opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of the facts as he/she sees them.~~

~~Upon concluding an investigation, the administrator will, prepare,~~ a written report including:

1. A statement of the complaint prepared by the complainant and specifying the precise nature of the complaint. The statement must be signed by the complainant.
2. A summary of the pertinent information discovered during the investigation.
3. A summary of the opportunities afforded both sides to be heard during the investigation.
4. ~~A concluding decision on the complaint by the administrator, which is submitted in full to the Superintendent and provided in a redacted form (to protect student privacy) to the complainant.~~

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REDLINED VERSION for CONSIDERATION OF REVISIONS  
May 19, 2020

Documents relative to the complaint filing and investigation shall not automatically become part of the specific employee's personnel file. After complete and thorough investigation by the administration, any documents placed in any employee's personnel file shall be dealt with according to the appropriate article of the applicable collective bargaining agreement. By openly participating in the investigation, neither the specific employee nor the bargaining agent waives its rights to further action.

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A request to appeal a decision by the administrator may be made to the Superintendent. Any request to appeal to the Superintendent must be in writing, signed by the Complainant, and made within fifteen (15) school days of the decision of the administrator. The Superintendent shall have the discretion whether to hear such an appeal. The Superintendent's decision on the merits of the appeal or his/her decision not to hear such appeal, will be made within fifteen (15) school days of his/her receipt of such appeal. The Superintendent may extend the time to issue his/her decision by up to an additional fifteen (15) school days.

A request to appeal a decision of the Superintendent must be made to the Board within fifteen (15) school days of the Superintendent's decision. The Board shall have the discretion whether to hear such an appeal. Board involvement, if any, shall be in compliance with applicable law, collective bargaining agreements, and/or employment contracts. Issues pertaining to complaints against school personnel are, by law, the responsibility of the Superintendent. The Board will hear a complaint about school personnel only in exceptional circumstances. The Board's appeal procedure is described in Policy 1312, Article II.

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**Deleted:** The Superintendent shall provide a written response to the complaint within ten (10) school days from his receipt of the report from the principal, Director of Pupil Services or other administrator assigned by the Superintendent notifying the complainant of his/her decision and whether Board involvement will be necessary to resolve the matter. If the Superintendent decides to conduct a further investigation regarding the complaint, the Superintendent shall provide a written response within ten (10) school days of the conclusion of his/her investigation. The Superintendent will also notify the employee who is the subject of the complaint of his/her decision. If the Superintendent decides that Board involvement is not necessary, then the Superintendent's decision shall be final. ¶

¶  
The Superintendent shall prepare a written report of his/her own if the Superintendent decides that Board involvement is necessary to resolve the complaint or is required by applicable law, a collective bargaining agreement, or employment contract. Board involvement, if any, shall only occur upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and shall be in compliance with applicable law, collective bargaining agreements, and/or employment contracts. Issues pertaining to complaints against school personnel are, by law, the responsibility of the Superintendent. The Board will hear a complaint about school personnel only in exceptional circumstances.

**Deleted:** If a specific employee is involved in an informal or formal investigation, that employee shall be advised of the nature of the complaint and shall be given every opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of the facts as he/she sees them.¶

**Deleted:** Documents relative to the complaint filing and investigation shall not automatically become part of the specific employee's personnel file. After complete and thorough investigation by the administration, any documents placed in any employee's personnel file shall be dealt with according to the appropriate article of the applicable collective bargaining agreement. By openly participating in the investigation, neither the specific employee nor the bargaining agent waives its rights to further action.¶

**Request for Re-Evaluation of Instructional Materials**

The following procedure shall be followed whenever there is a request for the evaluation of instructional materials and the Superintendent decides, in his/her discretion, to undertake a formal review. This procedure shall not be applicable to proposed changes in textbooks which are governed by Conn. Gen. Statutes Section 10-229.

1. The Superintendent shall establish an ad hoc review committee broadly representative of:
  - A. Teachers competent in the area of the content covered by the material.
  - B. Administrators, directors, and supervisors appropriate to the level and/or subject for which material is used.

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2. Objections to materials and requests for reevaluation must be presented in writing.
3. Initial action on a written request on the proper form shall be taken no later than fifteen (15) school days after receipt of the request.
4. A written report from the review committee shall be submitted to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall then communicate his or her decision to the person requesting reevaluation.
5. Should the decision of the Superintendent not satisfy the person(s) requesting the reevaluation, the Board of Education may hold a special hearing to review the Superintendent's decision. The procedures set forth in Board Policy 1312 shall apply to such special hearing. If the Board of Education decides not to hold a special hearing, then the Superintendent's decision shall be final.
6. Instructional materials may be deemed appropriate whenever it is found that there is a legitimate pedagogical basis for the materials, irrespective of the fact that individuals may have objected to the material.
7. Once instructional material has been adopted and reevaluated, the material cannot be subject to further review without special approval by the Board of Education. Challenged instructional materials shall remain in use in the schools pending a final decision by the Board of Education.

**Policy References:**

Policy 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression

Policy 6144 – Controversial Issues

Policy 6161 – Equipment, Books, Materials: Provisions/Selection

**Legal References:**

Conn. Gen. Statutes Section 10-229

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988)

REDLINED VERSION for CONSIDERATION OF REVISIONS  
May 19, 2020

Regulation Approved: December 4, 1989  
Regulation Revised: October 18, 2010  
May 15, 2017

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Weston, Connecticut

**5135  
Students**

**POLICY REGARDING STUDENT USE OF  
THE DISTRICT'S COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND INTERNET SAFETY**

Computers, computer networks, electronic devices, Internet access, and e-mail are effective and important technological resources. The Board of Education provides computers, a computer network, Internet access, an e-mail system, as well as other electronic devices that access the network such as wireless and/or portable hand-held equipment that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture and recording, sound recording, information transmitting and/or receiving, storing, etc. (including, but not limited to, personal laptops, Smartphones, network access devices, cellular telephones, radios, MP3 and other digital audio players, CD players tablet computers, walkie-talkies, personal data assistants, digital cameras, and other electronic signaling devices (referred to collectively as "Computer Systems")), in order to enhance both the educational opportunities for our students and the business operations of the District.

These Computer Systems are business and educational tools. As such, they are made available to students in the District for education related uses. The Administration shall develop regulations setting forth procedures to be used by the Administration in an effort to ensure that such Computer Systems are used by students solely for education related purposes. The Board will educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyber-bullying awareness and response. Additionally, the Board will implement a technology protection measure to block or filter Internet access to sites that contain obscene material, contain child pornography, or are harmful to minors and ensure, to the extent possible, that such filtering technology is operative during computer use by students.

As the owner of the Computer Systems, the Board reserves the right to monitor the use of the Computer Systems.

**Legal References:**

- Children's Internet Protection Act, Pub. L. 106-554, codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)
- Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182b; 53a-183; 53a-250
- Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 6777
- Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, Pub. Law 110-385, codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)(5)(B)(iii)

**Policy References:**

**Policy No. 5114, Student Discipline**

**Policy No. 5131.911, Bullying**

**Regulation No. 5131.911, Safe School Climate Plan**

**Policy 5136, Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices By Students**

**Policy No. 6184, Unexpected Broadcast**

**ADOPTED: August 20, 2001**

**REVISED: August 20, 2007**

**June 17, 2013**

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Weston, Connecticut**

**R5135  
Students**

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING STUDENT USE OF  
THE DISTRICT'S COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND INTERNET SAFETY**

Introduction

Weston Public Schools ("the District") is pleased to offer students access to the Board's computers and computer networks, including access to electronic mail (e-mail) and the Internet, as well as electronic devices described in Policy Number 5135, (all of which will be referred to collectively as "Computer Systems".) Access to the Computer Systems will enable students to explore libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with others. Such access is provided solely for education-related purposes. Use of the District's Computer Systems will be allowed only for students who act in a considerate and responsible manner in using such systems.

The Board and the Administration believe in the educational value of such Computer Systems and recognize their potential to support our curriculum by expanding resources available for staff and student use. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

These Computer Systems are expensive to purchase, install and maintain. As the property of the District these Computer Systems must be carefully handled and their integrity preserved for the benefit of all. Therefore, *access to the Computer Systems is a privilege, and not a right*. Students will be required to adhere to a set of policies and procedures, as set forth in detail below. Violations may lead to withdrawal of the access privilege and/or disciplinary measures in accordance with the Board's student discipline policy.

Definitions

**Obscene** – means any material or performance if, a) taken as a whole, it predominantly appeals to the prurient interest, b) it depicts or describes in a patently offensive way a sex act and c) taken as a whole, does not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. For the purposes of this section, "sex act" means erotic fondling, nude performance, sexual excitement, sado-masochistic abuse, masturbation or sexual intercourse.

**Child pornography** – means any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video, picture, cartoon, or computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where -

- (a) the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
- (b) such visual depiction is, or appears to be, of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
- (c) such visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

*Harmful to minors* – any picture, image, graphic image file, other visual depiction, or audio recording that:

- (a) taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- (b) depicts, describes or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- (c) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

### Monitoring

Students are responsible for good behavior on the Computer Systems just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the Computer Systems are often public in nature and general school rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will comply with District standards and will act in a responsible and legal manner, at all times in accordance with District standards, as well as with state and federal laws.

It is important that students and parents understand that the Board, as the owner or lessee of the Computer Systems, reserves the right to monitor and review the use of these Computer Systems. The District intends to monitor and review in a limited fashion, but will do so as it deems appropriate to ensure that the Computer Systems are being used for District-related educational purposes.

As part of the monitoring and reviewing process, the District will retain the capacity to bypass any individual password of a student or other user. *The system's security aspects, such as personal passwords and the message delete function for e-mail, can be bypassed for these purposes.* The District's ability to monitor and review is not restricted or neutralized by these devices. The monitoring and reviewing process also includes, but is not limited to: oversight of Internet site access, the right to review electronic communications sent and received the right to track students' access to blogs, electronic bulletin boards, social media, and chat rooms, and the right to review a student's document downloading and printing.

Therefore, all users must be aware that *they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of these Computer Systems.*

## Student Conduct

Students are permitted to use the District's Computer Systems for legitimate educational purposes. Personal use of District Computer Systems by elementary school and intermediate school students is expressly prohibited. Personal use of the Computer Systems by high school and middle school students is permitted. Such personal use of the Computer Systems by middle and high school students, however, is subject to all Board policies and regulations, including monitoring of all such use, as well as any rules that the Superintendent may establish. Moreover, any such personal use shall not interfere in any manner with instructional time, and under no circumstances should such personal use occur during class.

Conduct which constitutes inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Sending any form of harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to any person (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to other "computer systems" as that term is defined above;
- Using another person's password and/or username to access that person's account or otherwise attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Computer Systems;
- Misrepresenting oneself as another individual or entity and/or modifying files, communications, other data, passwords or usernames belonging to another person and/or to which access is not otherwise available to the student;
- Damaging computers, computer files, computer systems or computer networks;
- Downloading or modifying computer software of the District in violation of the District's licensure agreement(s) and/or without authorization from a teacher or administrator;
- Trespassing in or tampering with any other person's folders, work, communications, files, or other data;
- Sending any message that breaches the District's confidentiality requirements, or the confidentiality of students;
- Failing to adhere to copyright laws including, but not limited to, using the Computer Systems to reproduce, copy, save, improperly cite,

and/or distribute materials subject to copyright except as permitted by law;

- Using the Computer Systems for any personal purpose, except as provided in these Regulations, or in a manner that interferes with the District's educational programs;
- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, contains child pornography, or is harmful to minors, as defined above;
- Transmitting or receiving e-mail communications or accessing information on the Internet for non-educational purposes;
- Cyberbullying as defined in Policy and Administrative Regulation 5131.911;

In addition, as noted above, if a particular behavior or activity is generally prohibited by law, by Board policy or by school rules or regulations, use of these Computer Systems for the purpose of carrying out such behavior or activity is also prohibited.

*Misuse of the Computer Systems, or violations of these policies and regulations, may result in loss of access to such Computer Systems as well as other disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion, depending on the specific conduct. Further, if the conduct may constitute criminal activity, law enforcement may be notified.*

Anyone who is aware of problems with, or misuse of these Computer Systems, or has a question regarding the proper use of these Computer Systems, should report this to his or her teacher or principal immediately. Most importantly, the Board and the Administration urge *any* student who receives *any* harassing, threatening, intimidating or other improper message through the Computer Systems to report this immediately. It is the Board's policy that no student should be required to tolerate such treatment, regardless of the identity of the sender of the message. *Please report these events* to the school.

### Internet Safety

The Administration will take measures, as it deems appropriate: to assure the safety and security of students when using District managed e-mail, chat rooms, social media, and other forms of direct electronic communications; to prohibit unauthorized access of the Computer Systems, including "hacking" and other unlawful activities online; to prohibit unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personally identifiable information regarding students available on the Computer Systems; to educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber-bullying (as defined in Policy and

Regulation No. 5131.911) awareness and response; and to restrict students' access to online materials harmful to minors, including obscene materials and child pornography.

Legal References:

Children's Internet Protection Act, Pub. Law 106-554, codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)  
Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520  
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 6777  
Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, Pub. Law 110-385, codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)(5)(B)(iii)  
18 U.S.C. § 2256 (definition of child pornography)  
Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973) (definition of obscene)  
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182b; 53a-183; 53a-250 (computer-related offenses)  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-193 (definition of obscene)

Policy References:

Policy No. 5114, Student Discipline  
Policy No. 5131.911, Bullying  
Regulation No. 5131.911, Safe School Climate Plan  
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ADOPTED: August 20, 2007  
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WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Weston, Connecticut