



## POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

September 4, 2013  
Seymour Middle School  
Library Media Center  
7:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kristen Harmeling, Chairperson  
James Garofolo  
Jay Hatfield 7:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Yashu Putorti, Chairman  
Jennifer Magri

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Christine Syriac, Superintendent  
Nancy Snopkowski, Associate Superintendent  
Joan Rinkewith, Head Nurse  
Mary Sue Feige, Principal Bungay School  
David Olechna, Principal Chatfield-LoPresti School  
Leslie Sojka, Assistant Principal Chatfield-LoPresti  
Cindy Brooks, Food Services Director  
Fred Dorsey, Board Attorney  
Dr. Gerald Germano, Pediatrician  
Pat Boyle, Board Clerk

PARENTS IN ATTENDANCE: Dawn Adams  
Gina Antignani  
Agatha Parlak  
Colleen Maguire

### I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Mrs. Harmeling called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:10 p.m.

### II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Antignani, 73 Maple Street, Seymour CT stated that she received a letter from the school stating that the room would be peanut-free and then continued to state that the children could bring a wrapped peanut-butter sandwich to school for lunch as long as they did not sit at the peanut free table. This makes the room no longer peanut-free. Her doctor, Dr. Germano said there should be no nuts in the room as this was a danger to her daughter. She met with Mrs. Snopkowski, Joan Rinkewith, and via phone with Dr. Germano. The room is now nut free.

Dr. Germano, 20 Westfield Avenue, Ansonia CT (practice) stated that there are between 500-1000 deaths each year from anaphylaxis and that 30% percent of those are due to food allergies: 90% of those being peanuts. In 2011 Congress has passed a Voluntary Guideline for Schools which still has not been published. 70% of allergic children have their first anaphylactic episode in school. He stressed the importance of having not only each allergic child's individual Health Plan but also an emergency plan for all students.

Mrs. Parlak, 239 Pearl Street, Seymour CT says her child does not have allergies but what should the parents do that have a child that will only eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches?

Mrs. Antigani said she wasn't asking for there to be no nuts in the school just that her daughter's room be nut-free. She also thanked everyone for all of their efforts for her daughter.

Public Comment closed at 7:18.

### III. REPORTS AND INFORMATION

#### A. Discussion and possible recommendation to the full Board on Policy #5141.25 – Students with Special Health Care Needs, Accommodating Students with Special Dietary Needs

Mrs. Syriac stated that she was not recommending a change to the policy but to the regulations. She said in the course of looking at this policy she realized that our nut-free regulation did not mean that we were really nut-free and that nut products were allowed in the classroom. Currently we have a peanut-free table in the cafeteria for students with allergies. Other students are allowed to sit there as long as they have no nuts in their lunches. The staff then has to supervise this policy. Everything served by the cafeteria has been approved by Mrs. Brooks as nut-free with one exception; a sealed peanut butter sandwich. Christine would like to change the regulation to state that if you have purchased hot lunch then you may sit at the peanut-free table.

#### Regulations to be evaluated:

1. Change #1: "such as peanut allergies" to either food allergen free, or nut-aware
2. Change #10c: "prepared at home" to "provided from home"
3. Change #10J: "peanut-free" to either food allergen free or nut-aware
4. Change #13: Staff will not determine if a food is safe to eat for a student with a life-threatening food allergy

#### Guidelines to be evaluated:

1. Change #8: "peanut-free" to either food allergen free or nut-aware and add the statement that food containing nuts will be stored outside the classroom
2. Change #9: "peanut-free" to either food allergen free or nut-aware. Add that any student may sit there if they bought the hot school lunch
3. Change #10: add "The table will be thoroughly washed by an adult"
4. Change #14: All Star Transportation drivers do not administer Epi-pens. Therefore, this should be changed to state "All buses are equipped with a 2 way radio. Drivers are instructed to pull-over and call 911 in an emergency"

#### Remove appendix

Mr. Dorsey said to be consistent we need to change J as well to allergen free. He also wanted to know if we were talking any allergies or just life-threatening allergies. Mrs. Harmeling wanted to know if we need that when the policy stated life-threatening allergies. Mr. Dorsey suggested that "Pertaining to Life-Threatening Food Allergies" should be at the top of the regulations as well as at the top of the guidelines. Mr. Putorti wanted to make sure that we were clear that we were talking about food allergies not any other life-threatening allergies. Dr. Germano said 90% of life-threatening food allergies are nut related. Typically it is not an airborne allergy but must be ingested. Mrs. Rinkewith said she has students carrying Epi-pens for apples, milk, carrots, and eggs. She stated the designation of nut-free or milk-free, etc would be determined based on the current population of students and reviewed yearly to meet the needs of the school based on the students Individual Health Plans. No student is forced to sit at the nut-free table; the parent has the option of allowing their student to sit at any table. The decision is included in the Individual Health Plan. Mrs. Brooks stated that her biggest concern is what is brought from home. There is no control over this. Mrs. Rinkewith says when in doubt, and when she is unable to reach a parent to have them okay a treat brought to school, she does not allow the student to have the treat. Mr. Olechna says he has 14 or 15 classrooms with students with nut allergies. Three of the five kindergarten classes have students with allergies. The kindergarten teachers have sent letters home to parents saying only non-food items are to be sent in for birthdays. The kindergarten lunches for the classrooms are stored in the cafeteria. Snacks are wrapped separately, not in lunch boxes and are to contain no nuts. If the teacher sees a snack with nuts it is removed. Mr. Hatfield wanted to clarify "no food items". This means pens, pencils, stickers, etc? Mr. Dorsey wanted to clarify "nut-free" does not guarantee that something might not contain nuts. But that the best effort possible will be made. Mr. Putorti wanted to use the term "nut-aware" instead of "nut-free". Mrs. Rinkewith will have signs posted outside of classrooms with life-threatening allergies. "There is a child with a severe nut allergy in this room", other life-threatening food allergies will be similarly treated.

Mrs. Parlak wanted to know if all of those nut-free rooms were really necessary and couldn't they be combined in the future. Also, shouldn't the other parents have the option of not having their child in a designated class? Mrs. Syriac stated that many factors go into what room a child is placed in and moving a child because he or she is able to consume nut products only for that reason that would not be justified.

Mrs. Syriac will make the revisions and forward them to the full Board.

**B. Reports**

1. No Chairman's Report
2. No Superintendent's Report

IV. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Mr. Hatfield)

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Jim Garofolo, Jay Hatfield, Kristen Harmeling

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by:  
Pat Boyle