



*Respectful, Responsible, Safe & Prepared*

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 12, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.**  
**Waupaca High School Community Room and [Live Stream](#)**

**Welcome and Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chairperson Dale Feldt at 5:31 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

Present in the WHS Community Room: All members of the Committee were present (Chairperson Dale Feldt, Molly McDonald, and Steve Klismet). Additionally, Board members Ron Brooks and Lori Verhalen were present.

**Also Present:**

Present in the WHS Community Room: Mark Flaten, Sandy Lucas, Michael Werbowsky, Kyle Scherwinski, John Meyer, Carrie Naparalla, and Sandy Robinson.

**Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made by Steve Klismet and seconded by Molly McDonald to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**Review of Board Meeting Norms:**

The Committee reviewed their collective commitments.

**5-12 Student Dress Code Review and Discussion:**

Chairperson Dale Feldt advised that the purpose of this meeting is to review the student dress code and discuss concerns that were raised, particularly at WMS. He reviewed Board Policy 5511 Dress and Grooming, highlighting paragraphs A and E. In particular, the last sentence of paragraph A, “School staff shall consider the link between the potential disruption or interference and the student’s attire at issue when making decisions under this provision.”

**5-12 Student Dress Code Implementation Discussion:**

Middle School Principal John Meyer advised that when warmer weather arrived in April, he again made parents and students aware of the dress code guidelines and expectations as well as the implementation of it. Mr. Meyer has not heard anything further since that particular warm day. The staff are doing their best to interpret the expectations but it is not black and white, so there may be some misinterpretation of the expectations but there also has to be some flexibility as well.

The Committee asked what transpired and how the students were checked when advised that they did not meet the dress code. Was it done in a way so as to not humiliate or embarrass the student? Was the student asked to bend over? Mr. Meyer advised that the students were absolutely not asked to bend over; they were asked to stand up and put their hands by their side. That may have come from his presentation that was given to staff, students, and parents at the beginning of the year and in April when he may have stated that when at home, if you can see

your midriff or when you bend over you can see your buttocks, it is too short and not appropriate. He noted that the guidelines and expectations set out in the presentation are unisex. Mr. Meyer's goal was to quickly solve the problem and provide clarity of what the expectations are. They absolutely did not want to humiliate, but wanted to put a swift stop to the problem so they reached out to students and addressed the problem privately.

It is the Administration's role to speak with the student. If a female student is not comfortable speaking with a male administrator, they can talk to a female staff person such as a nurse or school counselor. Discussion of the dress expectations is very sensitive, but it is important to remember that we have to keep our staff and other students safe as well. Chairperson Feldt added that it is important that we protect our staff if they feel uncomfortable when a student's dress is inappropriate. When he was teaching, he would contact the school nurse and the student would be called down between classes. Director of Teaching and Learning Mark Flaten reminded everyone that there is usually a root cause and it is important to remember to be respectful; every situation is different.

The Committee suggested that there needs to be some consistency between the middle and high schools. However, Mr. Flaten pointed out that the difference in the maturity level of the students at WMS and WHS plays a big part. High School Principal Michael Werbowski added that student dress code issues at WHS are difficult, but if someone is uncomfortable they are asked to contact Administration to address. Associate Principal Jenifer Erb and Dean of Students Kyle Scherwinski handle most of these types of issues.

The Committee reiterated their concern regarding how the matter is handled so the student does not feel humiliated or embarrassed and if staff are provided any training on how to handle these situations. Mr. Scherwinski advised that there is absolutely no shaming. Many times when students are asked to speak with Administration they already know their dress is inappropriate and that is the reason why. Administration uses the conversation as a teachable moment. Mr. Werbowski added that he talks with staff regarding how to handle these situations at faculty meetings.

Chairperson Feldt stressed that these are teachable moments for our students. Board President Ron Brooks reiterated that it is important to make it a teachable moment and explain why it is inappropriate; it is not meant to embarrass the student but to get them to understand why it is inappropriate. Mr. Flaten noted that the WHS student dress code policy states that it is important that a school environment be "safe, conducive to learning and free from disruption". He noted that the interpretations of the dress code from one staff person to another are different. Mr. Meyer added that students will push the boundaries. When they are spoken to about their inappropriate dress, they are not written up for it as a disciplinary matter and it is not entered in their student record. Administration always uses it as a re-teaching moment.

Mr. Scherwinski advised that when a student is brought in, they call a parent/guardian and put that parent/guardian on speakerphone and the student advises him/her what occurred. Most times it is a simple conversation and all then go on with their day. Mr. Werbowski added that having the student explain it to their parent/guardian seems to bring it more to light and make it more clear to them.

With regard to inappropriate dress by student spectators at sporting events, Mr. Werbowski advised that sometimes the student comes to the event wearing a hoodie or baggy sweatshirt and then takes it off, at which time staff address it as best they can. If the student continues to do this multiple times, staff remove them from the event.

Mr. Meyer advised that if it is argued that some of the sports teams wear short shorts, they are advised that is an elective which is after hours of instruction and is an athletic uniform. Mr. Flaten added that there is a time and place for everything. Athletics are a school and WIAA sanctioned sporting event. It was noted that if a student wants to play a particular sport but is uncomfortable with the uniform, they and/or their parent/guardian can speak with Director of Co-Curricular Activities and Athletics Rob Scherrer about there possibly being an alternative uniform the student athlete could wear.

The Committee reiterated that their goal was consistency in the schools' handbooks regarding the dress code. However, they can understand the reason for some of the differences in the language and that it is pretty consistent between the middle and high schools.

Committee member Steve Klismet recalled an issue last year regarding the display of a Confederate flag. It was noted that this was taken care of in a different Board policy, #8805, which was approved by the Board last December. Mr. Scherwinski advised that the reference to the Confederate flag in the current WHS handbook will be removed in its update for next year.

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Molly McDonald and seconded by Steve Klismet to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 p.m. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.