



Stafford Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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Steven A. Moccio
Superintendent of Schools

October 31, 2023

Dear Stafford Public Schools Parents / Guardians,

Last Friday, October 27th, my newsletter included information regarding recently adopted revisions of policies that were approved by the Board of Education on Monday, October 23rd. As with many districts throughout the State, the district utilizes the legal firm of Shipman & Goodwin for model policies.

I write to provide clarification regarding Policy 5143 Health Assessments: Screenings, as it has come to my attention that there is some confusion, and much discussion on social media, specifically regarding Section VII - Other Non-Emergency Invasive Physical Examinations and Screenings. ***The District does not practice any type of physical examination of "private areas" of students. Should a student present to our nursing staff with a concern regarding that region of their body, the District will continue to contact parents / guardians, inform them of the situation, and request they seek their own professional medical assessment.***

One may ask, "Then why is this necessary and/or included in the policy?" Shipman & Goodwin has confirmed that this section was taken verbatim from the Student Privacy Policy Office of the United States Department of Education's [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment \(PPRA\), 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1232h](#). The PPRA requires any school district that receives funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop a policy or policies pertaining to various matters, including physical examinations and screenings of students. Section VII of Policy 5143 utilizes the definitional language from the PPRA regarding "non-emergency invasive physical examination or screening". While Shipman & Goodwin is unsure why Congress chose that particular definition in the statute, they have considered two possibilities: (1) it applies to school districts all over the country, which may have had practices very different from those in Connecticut and (2) it may have been meant to address rogue employees.

The amendment provides protections **FOR** students against the completion of specific surveys and physical exams without prior notice to parents and an ability to opt-out. Secondary school parents have witnessed this firsthand in April 2023, when all secondary students (grades 6-12) in the Stafford Public Schools participated in the Youth Voices Count Survey on youth lifestyles, substance use,

mental health, related risk and protective factors. Parents / guardians were informed **PRIOR** to the survey being proctored and were provided an ability to opt out, as seen by the overall response rate of 91%.

I hope this communication helps to clarify the policy and provide a level of comfort to parents that these practices are not occurring in the Stafford Public Schools. I wish to also personally thank the two (2) parents that reached out to my office directly and asked clarifying questions. My office will communicate future updates regarding the variety of topics impacting our schools and community through my newsletters and during Board of Education meetings.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions and concerns regarding this, or any other matters, in the future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven A. Moccio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Steven A. Moccio
Superintendent of Schools