

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 5, 2009

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Subcommittee: Diana Campbell, Chair, Denise Arsenault and John Bento

School Committee and Administration: Marjorie McBride, John Saviano, Edward Mara and Melinda Thies

Diana Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Diana acknowledged Marjorie McBride's kindness in guiding her as the new Chair, also for her role in updating the Policy Book when she was Chair; she thanked Marjorie for the excellent job she did for many years as Chair of this Committee.

Approval of Minutes

Because there were insufficient members present who attended the September 2 meeting, Diana Campbell will ask the School Committee Chair to place this on the agenda of the next full Committee meeting for approval by previous Subcommittee members.

Denise Arsenault questioned the reference in the September 2 minutes regarding the procurement policy to "§C and Fi"; this refers

to instances when the policy may be waived. Denise also asked for clarification on Tara Thibaudeau's request to reconsider the Entrance Age Policy. Dr. Mara explained that the District will adhere to its own policy, which was strongly recommended by RIDE; also that 50% of the students born after September 1 who tested for Kindergarten were unsuccessful.

Subcommittees of the School Committee (Policy BCE-R)

The Chair wished to review the responsibilities of this Subcommittee for the new members.

„Í §Periodically studies reports on student progress and on standardized test results.Í”

This information is usually presented in Melinda Thies's and Mary Cerullo's monthly reports and does not come to light unless a Committee member asks for further discussion. Diana would like to have more activity and public involvement on this topic. The Committee discussed methods to get this information out (workshop agenda item, separate public forum), the flow and handling of the information (to Policy Subcommittee first, then summary prepared for presentation) and the importance of timing. Actually, each school is mandated to report out their own test results to parents which is usually done annually at a PTO meeting. All agreed this information is something for the District to promote and celebrate and the Committee should think further about how to go forward. Dr. Mara

mentioned that every educational decision made by the District is based on data.

„Í ¡§Represents the board in matters concerning security, space and community use of facilities.¡”

This means that the outdoor sports played indoors issue as well as the field usage issue belongs in this Subcommittee rather than, or as well as, with Budget/ Facilities.

„Í ¡§Handles community affairs.¡”

Diana Campbell and Melinda Thies have developed a plan for training students on School Committee processes, using a ¡§speed dating¡” format; this is planned for February 9, before the School Committee Workshop.

„Í ¡§Executes on behalf of the Board the public relations program adopted by the Board.¡”

Denise Arsenault asked for more information on the public relations program. Dr. Mara is the PR person for the School Committee; information is disseminated through regular newsletters and the posting of meeting information required by law.

MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to continue this discussion to the next meeting. John Bento seconded; the motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

Medically Fragile Students (Policy JHCE) Recode

As it turns out, there is no duplication of this code and no action is necessary.

Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

Policy BDDB iV Agenda iV Meeting Format

Marjorie McBride had brought a concern of the new School Committee Chair that item VI. Reports, c, d and e be generic and kept open to administrative changes that occur in the District. Diana Campbell asked the Superintendent to draft wording, such as "other reports as deemed necessary by the Chair", and report back at the next Subcommittee meeting.

Policy KD (also BDDH) Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

Marjorie McBride reported that Paul Silva would like Public Forum in each meeting; this policy was revised a year ago in a way to provide flexibility for any Chair to use Public Forums as they so desire. Denise Arsenault would like to have Paul Silva's input before making any decisions.

MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to ask Dr. Mara to draft a revision to Policy BDDB, Item VI Reports, in order to keep it generic

and open, and report back to this Subcommittee at the next meeting. John Bento seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent's Continuous Improvement Plan

Denise Arsenault questioned where the responsibility lies to review the Superintendent's goals; Policy or Personnel Subcommittee. The real issue is the Superintendent's goals are to be aligned with School Committee goals, and despite Diana Campbell's reminders, the full Committee was unable to devote the necessary time to update their goals due to the overwhelming commitment of time to the Bond Projects; also, there were no real issues with the Superintendent's performance.

Marjorie McBride left the meeting at 7:05 PM.

Denise Arsenault suggested a special meeting to work on goals. Diana Campbell felt it should be addressed at the February workshop. She will propose that Paul Silva place the discussion on the agenda. Should he agree, Diana Campbell asked that the existing School Committee goals be distributed with that agenda.

MOTION: John Bento motioned that the Policy Subcommittee make a request to the School Committee Chair that the Superintendent's Continuous Improvement Plan and School Committee Goals be placed on the February Workshop agenda for discussion. Denise

Arsenault seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Peanut Allergy Law

Denise Arsenault asked about the dissemination of information on students with medical issues and the handling of unexpected medical emergencies such as allergic reactions. Strict procedures are in place for substitute teachers and coaches are trained in first aid, but there are gaps with advisors and chaperones working with students off site and substitutes who may be unexpectedly called into unassigned classrooms for coverage. Diana Campbell questioned whether the medically fragile policy should be expanded. Dr. Mara will discuss the issue with the middle and high school administrators on Friday. The availability and use of epi-pens was also discussed. John Bento felt it is important for all people observing the issue to be educated and have a basic understanding of handling emergencies.

The new peanut allergy law addresses parents' concerns about mandated segregation in common areas. More discussion is necessary.

MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to continue this discussion at the next meeting. John Bento seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

English as a Second Language Instruction (IGBI)

There were no concerns with the recommended changes to the policy; changes are in compliance with the law.

MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to forward the revised English as a Second Language Instruction policy to the full Committee for a first reading at the January business meeting. John Bento seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

February 2, 2009, 6:00 PM at Oliver

Adjournment

At 7:47 PM, Denise Arsenault motioned to adjourn; John Bento seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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