

# **POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

**July 6, 2010**

**Oliver Administration Building**

## **Present**

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

**School Committee and Administration: Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade and Mary Almeida**

**Guests: Liz Simeone (parent)**

**Diana Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.**

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

**All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**

## **Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION: John Bento motioned to approve the minutes to the June 7, 2010 meeting; Denise Arsenault seconded. The motion to approve passed by a vote of 3 to 0.**

**Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Policy for Students (JFCH)**

**The chemical health policy was given to Andrew for a legal review.**

**Denise Arsenault stated for the record that she does not believe the School Committee should be setting the penalties for drug and alcohol infractions and she strongly objects. Diana argued that many policies have “up to” penalties to give guidance to administrators. Denise believes the school communities at each particular level are qualified to come up with consequences; the role of the Committee is education based. Diana said the Committee must set the rules—this is not acceptable in our schools. Denise feels we can do more as a community to help prevent these behaviors. Melinda stated it was incumbent on districts to develop policies in concert with school administration; a policy is required by law; she believes the original language was guided by the State.**

**Denise proposed research of the State’s requirements and because none of the consequences currently in place have decreased drug abuse, we examine what we should do differently and what we should do more of; Denise feels our policy should require more education of the community. Diana retorted that the requirement for good grades to participate in sports has been successful in getting students to do more homework and provide less time to engage in abusive activities; maybe a review of the health curriculum and ways to curb undesirable behaviors could be included under general procedures. Liz Simeone, a Mt. Hope parent, said the parents group at the high school is focusing on some connection to the school via sports,**

clubs and mentoring; the Principal has identified warning signs that lead to students dropping out.

Denise was steadfast in her belief that this is not the appropriate way to nourish students or a positive way to address issues; we have to engage the students. John Bento said at this level, we establish policy; do we start from scratch? Denise proposed much less detail; the handbook provides details. Diana believes this policy is important and has no problem adding things, but sometimes knowing the punishment for certain behaviors is a deterrent and she opposes elimination of the policy.

Melinda believes we must work with what we have for the time; this policy was developed for legal reasons and it is important for parents and students to be informed of the law and the consequences. John said the Committee could pose the policy to give administrators some latitude. Denise said parents read the handbook, but not the policy book; she feels the policy could state that punishments will be handed out without being specific, and that we need to reflect what the community wants for the kids. John agrees with the positive approach; the Committee is supposed to provide guidance and the handbook has to coincide with policy. Diana does not think Denise's proposal takes it far enough. Melinda agreed the handbook must follow District policy and the detail pieces are necessary. Denise stated that different approaches are necessary to touch each student; she feels we need to do more and suggested a group be formed to

**look at how to avoid some of the unwanted behaviors.**

**Diana asked Mario Andrade to expand purpose #6 to include one or two procedures on how to educate the community. Mario felt that if left vague, the policy will be difficult to implement. Denise reiterated our current policies are not working and intervention programs are necessary. Melinda believes this policy does give some guidance and some authority—both are needed; it also provides uniformity; she agrees with expanding it.**

**Denise again stated she would like to review the law and make recommendations; if a student gets ejected, he/she is disconnected and needs support. Diana suggested bringing the policy draft to the full Committee for a first reading and for input. Melinda feels the intervention and education piece is needed before that happens. Denise objected, saying the Committee is welcome to attend the Subcommittee meetings. Liz Simeone mentioned NECAP reporting and said the parents group would like the high school to have an annual meeting to discuss this topic.**

**MOTION: John Bento motioned to ask Mario Andrade to go through the policy and expand general procedures to include details on how to implement #6 in educating parents and providing intervention, and to research State law, statistics and educational programs. Denise seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.**

**John Bento strongly supports educating parents, but unfortunately, most often the ones most in need do not show up. He mentioned a play that was brought to the schools many years ago that had quite an impact. Liz has asked if there is a policy regarding chemical health and Melinda explained the attempts at a policy are under review for legality and ability to implement.**

### **Transportation Policies**

**Mario presented draft revisions of three policies:**

#### **JFCC Student Conduct on School Buses**

**John asked what happens if a bus driver witnesses something bad happening on the bus; Melinda explained the driver radios in to the bus company. Denise made some suggestions to keep the policy consistent.**

**MOTION: Denise motioned to adjust the second line in the first paragraph to read “. . the superintendent or his / her designee . .”; and to add wording to the second and third offense “. . . week(s); a parent conference with the principal is required.” John seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.**

#### **EEAA-R-2 Transportation Policy Guidelines**

**Mario consulted the bus company; this revision is a result of full-day K.**

**MOTION:** Denise motioned to continue discussion for one more month for Mario to adjust the language; John seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

### **EEBB Use of Private Vehicles on School Business**

**MOTION:** Denise motioned to forward the proposed revisions to the full Committee for a first reading. John seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Policy Review List**

**Chemical Health Policy:** Discussion continued to future meeting

**Superintendent's Continuous Improvement Plan:** Discussion at August School Committee workshop; timetable policy to each member for review

**TAOD Policy:** Discussion continued to September meeting

**Evaluation Instrument Review:** Melinda conducting a series of 4 meetings over the summer with some administrators

**Student Conduct on School Busses:** Discussion continued to September meeting

**Umbrella Chemical Health/TAOD Policy:** In collaboration with Andrew, Mario will draft a merger of both policies for discussion at September meeting

### **Next Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 7, 2010; 6:30 PM**

**Adjournment**

**MOTION: At 7:50 PM John Bento motioned to adjourn; Denise Arsenault seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**/ca**