

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

August 30, 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

Diana Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to approve the minutes to the July 6, 2010 meeting; John Bento seconded. Denise asked that the following sentence be removed from the last paragraph in the TAOD discussion since no one could recall who said it: "Others had looked into it and found it to be too costly." The motion to approve as amended passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

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

Denise Arsenault proposed to eliminate the student penalty section.

The Committee reviewed the changes Mario made to the policy as well as the comments submitted by Andrew. Mario distributed information from the RI Department of Health which he used as guidelines for amendments.

- P. 1, First Paragraph: The amendments to the first paragraph are acceptable.**
- Purpose #6: All agreed to include the phrase “Practices may include:” rather than stating specific actions; specifics would open doors to be challenged; and if it is stated, it must be delivered.**
- P.2 #2: acceptable.**
- “Smoking on School Premises - Smoking cessation programs will be offered to students.” The intent is not for nurses to provide the program but to provide information on programs available and this information should be available to all, not just those who wish to quit smoking. Mario referenced the National Association of State Boards of Education model; it was felt that this and other models such as the RI School Intervention Program should be further researched.**

Denise has researched policies of other Rhode Island districts and very much favors the approach used by the Providence School Department; Providence has developed a 14 page code of conduct, assigns each infraction to a specific level, and provides a list of possible consequences for each level. She believes it is administration's job to write regulations and not for the Committee to decide what are age appropriate behaviors at the different levels. Punishments are not the job of the Committee.

Melinda said in theory she agrees that at the School Committee level policies should be generalized, but many policies would have to be re-examined and this would take a considerable amount of time; the schools do look for some guidance. Denise proposes this is work that is worth doing. Diana disagrees that this is a regulation; we are trying to give principals some flexibility; we are saying that we are so concerned about students doing drugs and alcohol and we want to make sure there are some consequences for this behavior; at the very minimum we want to make sure parents are contacted and students make retribution. Denise feels the only time the Committee should write regulations is when the law says they have to; administration sets regulations. Diana does not believe we have the resources to change them all; we can make them flexible but this subcommittee is not up to rewriting the whole book. Denise reiterated she believes what we have is regulations in our policy book. Diana does not agree. John worries about the legalities of what Denise brings up; in his eyes, if a parent is concerned about a ruling of a principal, they

should go to the Superintendent, then to the School Committee and then to the State.

Melinda said she can see both points of view, however, administrators come and go and alignment across the elementary schools and between the middle and high schools and with School Committee policy provides some guidance, which is what administrators are looking for. Mario stated Providence uses the PBIS model which is very loose and they experience many problems with implementation. Melinda added that administrators had input into the development of these policies. Denise said academic probation was forced on them, they did not have input. Diana feels that as representatives of the town it is their obligation to express objection to social issues, e.x. segregation. Denise contends we are talking regulations. Diana does not agree.

Diana then suggested this conversation be continued to the next meeting and each member review a copy of the model for consideration of adoption. Melinda suggested Mario consult with upper elementary, middle and high school administrators to develop a template for a K-12 code of ethics. Denise believes this is the answer. Diana said the reason this policy is being discussed is because the principals of the high and middle schools brought to the subcommittee a policy that is more detailed and punitive seeking guidance and she believes the principals want the School Committee to have that role. John suggested we consult Andrew as well; we

need to determine where the buck stops.

Mario distributed information he collected on RI Law Title 16 Health and Safety of Pupils and Curriculum, RI Department of Health Reports on Academic Performance and Health Risks Among Public High School Students in 2007 and Among Public Middle School Students in 2007, Department of Health Survey Findings on Alcohol and Other Drug Use Among RI Public High School Students, and a list of Alcohol and Controlled Substance Offenses at KMS and MHHS from 2005-2010. John would like to know which other schools adopted the model.

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

Transportation Policies

Mario presented draft revisions of three policies:

JFCC Student Conduct on School Buses

MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to approve the draft revisions and forward the recommendation to the full Committee for a first reading. John Bento seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

EEAA Walkers and Riders

At the second reading by the full Committee Andrew suggested some revisions to the policy in regards to special needs students.

MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to approve the revisions proposed by Andrew Henneous and return the recommendation to the full Committee for a second reading. John Bento seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EEAA-R-2 Transportation Policy Guidelines

Melinda explained that in the past the District provided a great deal of personalized transportation service to kindergarten students; we have tried to tighten this up in the past few years, while being mindful of safety in heavily trafficked areas; the bus company uses computerized programs to develop the bus stops which are all within the state regulations.

MOTION: John Bento motioned to approve the recommended changes to this regulation and forward the recommendation to the full Committee for acceptance. Denise Arsenault seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

Superintendent's Evaluation / Continuous Improvement Plan

This Subcommittee was given the task to review the current superintendent evaluation instrument. Some Committee members in the past did not like it and so did not complete it. Melinda stated has

her personal goals and is unsure of the Committee's intent and whether they are looking for benchmarks; she is also unsure of where the Committee is with their goals. Melinda feels the evaluation should be evidence based; she will provide a portfolio; she needs to know what the expectations are and if there are measurable targets. Denise said the Committee's goals can include things that have nothing to do with the Superintendent; she would like the opportunity to speak with Melinda about her evaluation.

Melinda suggested the Subcommittee map the instrument against the RI Leadership Standards, recommend changes to the evaluation tool, and perhaps develop some performance indicators. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Curriculum Revision Cycles

Mario and Melinda explained the BEP requires the development of a five-year cycle for curriculum revision; our policies must reflect this; the next curriculum to be developed is science.

Policy Review List

Chemical Health Policy: Awaiting Andrew's review

Superintendent's Continuous Improvement Plan: Discussion with full Committee at October workshop

TAOD Policy: Discussion continued to October meeting

Evaluation Instrument Review: Melinda will make recommendations on the alignment of instrument with state model

Student Conduct on School Busses: Forwarded to full Committee for first reading

Umbrella Chemical Health/TAOD Policy: Discussion at October meeting; review tobacco model and policies for other districts; Mario to confer with administration

Curriculum Revision Cycles: Discussion continues

Next Meeting

Monday, October 4, 2010; 6:30 PM

Adjournment

MOTION: At 8:12 PM John Bento motioned to adjourn; Denise Arsenault seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

/ca