

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

April 4, 2011

Oliver Administration Building

MINUTES

Present

Subcommittee: Denise Arsenault, Chair, Karen Lynch and Susan Rancourt

School Committee and Administration: Paul Silva, William O'Dell, Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade, Mary Almeida, Leslie Anderson, Tracey McGee, Sonya Whipp and Tara McAuliffe

Other: Members of the Community

Note: Recording malfunctioned and is not available

Denise Arsenault called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Karen Lynch motioned to approve the minutes of the Sub Committee meeting of March 7, 2011; Susan Rancourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Use of Physical Restraint Policy (JKC JHFAA (also GBED))

Motion: Karen Lynch motioned to amend the Physical Restraint

Policy and forward to the School Committee for second reading at the upcoming meeting on April 25, 2011. Susan Rancourt seconded. Leslie Anderson had several suggestions/corrections. There was discussion regarding the term Seclusion Restraint. Bill O'Dell suggested the policy isn't clear enough as to what the actual subject matter is. A comment was made that it is a misconception that this is a "special needs" policy.

The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

No CFC or H-CFC Use Policy (FECCA)

Bill O'Dell asked for a clarification as to what the policy will actually accomplish. Agreement to forward the No CFC or H-CFC Use Policy as written to the School Committee for a second reading at April 25,2011 meeting.

Energy Efficient Equipment/ Appliances Policy (FECCB)

Bill O'Dell expressed concern that the policy would not allow the purchase of certain equipment that may be needed for the maintenance and theater departments. Denise responded that the policy is worded in accordance with the language the architect advising us suggested, applies to new construction and renovation, and future purchases of equipment. Melinda believes that this policy is necessary for us to be reimbursed for projects by housing aid. Denise concurred.

Agreement to forward the Energy Star Policy as written for a second

reading at the April 25, 2011 School Committee meeting.

Rockwell Boundaries Policy

Denise Arsenault welcomed the participants at the meeting, and informed all of the protocol for the discussion. All were welcomed to speak their concerns and comments (recording device was to be used) without interruption or rebuttal from other members in attendance. Order of those heard was the members of the public, school administrators and School Committee subcommittee members.

Milly Grieve: Ms. Grieve distributed copies of the current Rockwell School boundaries, and referenced her own numbering system, which prioritized neighborhoods in order of their distance from the Rockwell School. Expressed her concern that Block 8 is actually closer to the Rockwell School than it is to the Guiteras School. Currently some Block 8 children are being bussed to Guiteras.

Hillary Grieve-McDermott: Expressed her positive feelings that all schools in the District are high performing and well maintained. She echoed sentiments that the yearly uncertainty of where children from her neighborhood will attend is a concern.

Deana Dufficy: Also a parent in the District wishes that a policy be implemented which once and for all establishes which

neighborhoods will go to which schools. The yearly uncertainty and the exceptions granted from prior administrations have created blocks where children attend a number of schools, though they live side by side. These exceptions for attendance at certain schools have come about as a result of older siblings enrolled in a school and the will to keep siblings together. In addition, exceptions were made around the closing of the Reynolds Arts Magnet School. What has resulted is a number of busses entering the neighborhood in Block 8 as well as the uncertainty of yearly placements for the remaining families.

Diane Davis and daughter Nancy Davis Dubois- Longtime resident of Butterworth Avenue is looking for the closest school to her daughter's home nearby, for enrollment of her grandchildren. She stated that Rockwell was the traditional school for this neighborhood and should remain so. Also expressed concern about the number of busses headed to different schools, including OLMC from her street.

Sara Sweetman is a mom of an incoming K student. Though she lives in an area outside of the Rockwell School boundaries, she is aware that the assignments of children to that school impacts where her child may or may not attend. Would like to see consistency in the assignment of neighborhoods to a specific school. Fears that her child may be in a yoyo situation should Guiteras or Colt Andrews vary in their capacity to serve her neighborhood from year to year.

Paul Silva explained his role in the amendments to the Rockwell boundaries and his understanding of current practice. Concentric circles were applied around the School in order to achieve the order of Blocks, a practice which allowed for distance to factor into the priority enrollments.

Administrators weighed in on how current practice impacts the placement of children. Ms. Thies recognizes the need for more consistency and earlier notice to families of where their children will attend school. She has been interpreting the current boundaries as advised by the document that exists, last amended in 1996. She is committed to an audit of the current bussing practices, to assure efficiencies.

Sonya Whipp referenced the current method of placing incoming K students. All administrators are concerned about the rising numbers of K registrants and the incidence of late registrations which will continue to influence placement of children in particular schools. Tracey McGee mentioned that there simply are no new rooms to open in some of our schools.

Karen Lynch expressed the frustration over the current lack of space in all Bristol elementary schools, which truly does impact our ability to arrive at consistent boundaries and advance notice to families. She noted the amount of development, and potential for more of it within the Rockwell School boundaries map that currently is being

used.

Susan Rancourt noted that, as a parent, she traveled from Warren to Bristol to participate in the school community, which her child was a part of. She stated it was well worth the inconvenience.

Denise assured all that the two priorities will always be the academic setting that is best for students and good fiscal management. These may trump convenience as well as philosophy and promises of past administrations. The closing of two Bristol schools, the former Arts Magnet children being granted exceptions as to attendance at a particular school, a practice of trying to keep siblings in the same school, the addition of grades 4 and 5 to all of our district schools have all impacted the current situation. Good, bad or indifferent, these factors contribute to our current dilemma. The purpose of this evening's meeting was to collect as much information and as many views as we could.

The administration will take all factors under consideration and propose a policy and/or strategy about how to proceed in regards to the issues raised, at the May Policy Subcommittee meeting on May 2, 2011. Recommendations to the School Committee at large will follow.

All are welcome to attend.

Next Meeting

May 2, 2011, 5:30 PM at the Oliver Administration Building

Adjournment

Motion: At 8:20 PM Karen Lynch motioned to adjourn; Susan Rancourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Arsenault