

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

October 1, 2012

Oliver Administration Building

Present

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

School Committee, Administration & Guests: Bill O'Dell (6:08 pm)

Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade, Dr. Gregory Fox (6:18 p.m.) and Bobbi Jarvis (6:48 p.m.)

Denise Arsenault called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Karen Lynch motioned to approve the minutes to the May 7, 2012 meeting; Susan Rancourt seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

Health and Wellness Policy (JHCG)

Diana reviewed the evolution of the Health and Wellness Policy over the past year. The intentions of the policy are to ensure it is up to date with the latest guidelines, especially nutrition (Our current policy on nutrition was not up to date.), to streamline the policy in order to

make it easier for administration and parents by taking out extra language (Some parents have complained of inconsistencies from one principal to another.), and to check our policy against policies of neighboring towns (we heavily relied on the Town of Barrington's policy which included staff wellness). To accomplish this, the initial Health and Wellness group was further broken down into three subcommittees which included a Policy Team, Nutrition Team and Physical Fitness Team. Each of these teams were responsible for bringing their piece to the full committee where in the last few meetings we integrated all those parts to come up with the proposed draft of the Wellness Policy you see here. Our primary focus and responsibility with this policy is toward wellness. Denise also stated that the current Federal Administration is committed to wellness, especially in regard to free and reduced lunch.

Some concerns were raised that we are overstretching our boundaries on what we should be doing in schools, specifically taking issue with the following exemptions: (1.1) Teaching wellness in "other areas of curriculum", and (1.2) Exemptions regarding fundraising "sale of such items takes place one hour or more after the end of the school day". Related to (1.2), Dr. Fox explained that the hour is to get the children dismissed from school and give them enough time to make it home. An opinion was expressed that our responsibility to the children should be confined to the course of the school day. Dr. Fox responded saying he would be bothered by just doing the minimum citing the big picture that for the first time in

history, 15% of the population of 1st graders have a shorter projected lifespan than that of their parents due to poor nutrition choices. Dr. Fox feels we are in the best position to help kids get healthy. Some on the committee feel our job is only to educate and this would fall outside of that realm.

Denise asked the group to go through the policy with her section by section as our biggest concern is that everything related to the policy is up to date. The following suggestions and/or changes were cited:

Page 2, App. 1 – There are two App. 1's (JHCG & JHCG-E). The correct one should be JHCG-E. It was then suggested and agreed upon to replace the current App. 1 with RINR EZ Sheet.

Diana pointed out a correction that needs to be made on page 2 of the proposed draft which says “2010 Guidelines (App 1)” where it should be “2008 (2005)”.

It was brought up that 1.5 is not law (using school service providers not in agreement, and should be struck promoting a specific for-profit business.) Diana suggested changing language to say “a licensed food service provider”. There could be issues with parents who are not in a position to contract out to a “food service provider” and we would need to be sensitive to this. It was also felt that 1.5 “non-food celebrations” should be moved to top bulleted item.

Before Susan had to leave, she was asked if she had any changes she would like to see to the policy, and she stated the following change “Physical education should...”, instead of reading “shall”.

(Susan Rancourt left at 7:13 p.m.)

A suggestion was made to create a list of options for healthy snacks to be packed with a child’s lunch. Diana stated the Wellness Committee can create this list and amend the policy to include it once created. It was also suggested that teachers should receive this list.

(Bill O’Dell left at 7:22 p.m.)

To summarize, Denise stated that for now we will leave 1.5 as is except for 2nd bullet (licensed food service providers) and move non-food celebrations to top of bulleted items.

Page 5 “recess should never be withheld” was discussed. Melinda stated that there has always been some discretion with administrator and asked what would an alternative be? Maybe not going to recess with class, offer another physical activity. Melinda reminded those present that recess is not part of physical education. Withholding recess has been used to address severe disciplinary problems in an effort to reduce suspensions and has been effective in the elementary schools. Melinda stated she must advocate for her administrators. Diana suggested changing language to state, “Recess should only be

withheld as a disciplinary tool at the discretion of the administrator.” This wording will give parents leverage, too, as they can go to the principal with concerns. Melinda agreed. Denise stated that teachers will need to be notified that they will not be able to use this tactic as they have been. Bobbi brought up the point that research shows children who move during the day score better on tests. Melinda said this can be done as best practices, ie., teacher being creative in lessons as well as providing research to teachers on this. There are only 330 minutes of instructional time for the day. We have to be careful on what we put into policy - it must be enforceable.

Before Bill left the meeting, he requested that Melinda mention to the group that page 2 under membership language should be “student representation” and “parent representation” as opposed to a student/parent representative. Denise stated they will change to “students, parents and members of the community”.

Karen would like the committee to begin work on the changes discussed and present the policy for its first reading at the October 9th workshop. Diana would like further clarification on what is law in the policy. Mario said he will complete changes this week and have the revised draft in their packets for the October 9th Workshop. Karen made the suggestion to underline what is law when it comes before the school committee. Diana also requested that the pictures be eliminated from App. 5.

Adjournment

MOTION: At 8:23 pm Denise motioned to adjourn; Karen Lynch seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 2-0.

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