



Policy Subcommittee Meeting
Zoom Virtual Meeting [Link](#)
Zoom Webinar ID: 965 9158 5860
Meeting Password: 550593
Wednesday, October 14, 2020
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Present:

Anna Siedzik, Chairperson
Michelle Horgan, Vice Chairperson
Peter Wolczik, Secretary

Also Present:

Mary Beth Banios, District Superintendent
Dorothy Presser, MASC Representative
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary
Craig Genuardo, Athletic Director

1. Call to Order

7:00 PM

With a quorum and all members of the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* present, Ms. Seidzik, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. This meeting is being recorded and being held remotely per the emergency order of the Governor.

2. Approval of Minutes:

- 8/21/2019 Exhibit
- 11/20/2019 Exhibit
- 12/18/2019 Exhibit
- 3/4/2020 Exhibit
- 3/31/2020 Exhibit
- 4/15/2020 Exhibit
- 8/13/2020 [Exhibit](#)
- 9/8/2020 [Exhibit](#)

Ms. Horgan reports that Ms. Bailey will soon make available the Google Docs of the minutes (without exhibits) listed above (these include the 08/21/2019, 11/20/2019, 12/18/2019, 03/04/2020, 03/31/2020, 04/15/2020). Those minutes will then be approved at the soonest available *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* meeting. There are no objections or concerns with the [08/13/2020](#) and [09/08/2020](#) minutes as written above.

I MOVE THAT THE POLICY/LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVE THE POLICY/LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES FROM [08/13/2020](#) AND [09/08/2020](#), AS WRITTEN ABOVE IN THE EXHIBITS.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Peter Wolczik.

Peter Wolczik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;

Anna Siedzik YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of three (3) members present.

3. Adoption of Subcommittee Name and Charge for 2020-2021

Discussion regarding the adoption of the subcommittee name and charge, with all members agreeing to adopt the name, *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee*, which will be consistently reflected in all district documents and communications, and further to adopt the charge unchanged.

I MOVE THAT THIS SUBCOMMITTEE ADOPT THE NAME OF POLICY/LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE, AND FURTHER ADOPT THE CHARGE UNCHANGED, AS FOLLOWS: *THE POLICY/LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE WILL REVIEW, UPDATE, AND/OR ADD ANY POLICIES AS DEEMED NECESSARY.*

MOTION by Anna Siedzik; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Peter Wolczik YES;

Michelle Horgan YES;

Anna Siedzik YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of three (3) members present.

4. Review policies in the following sections:

A. Harassment Policy (ACAB)

[Exhibit 1](#)

[Exhibit 2](#)

[Exhibit 3](#)

Review of the *Harassment Policy (ACAB)* as detailed in exhibits [1](#), [2](#), and [3](#), above.

Dorothy Presser, MASC Representative, and Superintendent Banios recommend that the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* adopt the *Harassment Policy (ACAB)* as written in one of the examples above, with the understanding that federal regulations will likely require substantial revisions or rewriting in the near future. Ms. Presser explains that MASC will continue collaborating with the Attorney General's Office in order to monitor any requirements surrounding the district's adoption of this policy. There is brief discussion regarding the timeline anticipated to receive these new federal regulations.

Superintendent Banios verifies that Stacy Bucyk, *Director of Student Services*, is the district's Title IV Coordinator.

Ms. Siedzik inquires as to the language defining sexual harassment, with particular focus surrounding the property/area where the alleged harassment took place. There is discussion regarding conflicting language regarding whether a formal complaint needs to be filed, and how that complaint is to be filed - who files the report; who receives the report; levels of reporting; casual versus official complaint; when investigation begins; etc. There is a discussion regarding the draft policy language requiring a hearing with the accused's rights to cross examine the victim/complainant. Superintendent Banios explains that current policy and current statute allows cross examination to occur in written format, avoiding the potential trauma of an in-person cross examination.

There is discussion regarding Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District's ability to adhere to the record keeping standards and training compliance outlined in the draft harassment policy. Discussion regarding dissemination requirements, with Ms. Presser explaining that the Attorney General will provide additional guidance regarding dissemination, but that requirements on dissemination are typically met through distribution of the Student Handbook.

Ms. Horgan and Mr. Wolczik agree that their feedback and questions surrounding the Harassment Policy can wait until the policy is revised according to Attorney General recommendations.

Ms. Horgan wants to continue the normal practices of the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee*, and stick with those practices when revising policies. Ms. Presser states that she has been making revisions to the policies as needed, and is happy to continue this practice.

Ms. Presser will make the changes as discussed this evening, including identification of the district's Title IV Coordinator, Stacy Bucyk, *Director of Student Services* and specifying Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District whenever necessary throughout the policy document. A first and second reading of this policy will occur at the following two School Committee meetings: 10/21/2020 and 11/02/2020.

I MOVE THAT THE *POLICY/LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE* ACCEPT THE DISTRICT'S *HARASSMENT POLICY (ACAB)* AS WRITTEN ABOVE IN [EXHIBIT 1](#) WHICH IS FORMATTED IN A NUMBER/LETTER STYLE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE; AND FURTHER THAT THE SUBCOMMITTEE AGREE TO CHANGES TO THE POLICY LANGUAGE AS DISCUSSED THIS EVENING:

- IDENTIFY AND NAME THE "HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT" AS NECESSARY THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT, AND,
- IDENTIFY AND NAME STACY BUCYK, *DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES*, AS NECESSARY THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT WHEN REFERENCING THE DISTRICT'S TITLE IV COORDINATOR¹.

MOTION by Peter Wolczik; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Michelle Horgan | YES; |
| Peter Wolczik | YES; |
| Anna Siedzik | YES. |

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of three (3) members present.

B. School Committee Protocols

[Exhibit](#)

The *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* discusses the draft *School Committee Protocols*, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). Ms. Presser summarizes the feedback she received from two (2) School Committee members in response to the review of draft *School Committee Protocols* at the last School Committee meeting.

The *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee*, alongside Ms. Presser and Superintendent Banios, engage in an in-depth analysis as to the required revisions to language, formatting, and structure of the draft *School Committee Protocols*. Some such changes are indicated in the minutes below, while all final changes are reflected to the School Committee in the [10/21/2020 exhibit](#).

The *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* agrees to use the numbered bullet point format for this document, as displayed on page 2 of the [exhibit](#).

Discussion regarding **bullet point #9**, which reads:

¹ The Harassment Policy with the reflected changes as voted upon herein, can be found in the 10/21/2020 School Committee meeting exhibit, [here](#), with the final version reflected in the 11/04/2020 School Committee Meeting, [here](#).

Members will refer constituent concerns and complaints, including issues relating to District personnel, to the Superintendent or the School Committee Chair.

Based on this language, a discussion follows regarding the District's communication chain of command and general accepted practice in other districts. There is brief discussion regarding the need for Hamilton - Wenham to develop an organizational flow/hierarchy chart, as well as a brief discussion surrounding School Committee members' agreement to the language above. The discussion continues to address concerns regarding specific scenarios, some based on the turbulent nature in the District over the past 7 months. The conversation moves to a passionate exchange of opinions regarding School Committee protocols and policies seeking to govern public participation and citizen comments.

There is some disagreement regarding what issues fall within the School Committee's purview, and how to handle disagreements that may occur in the future. This leads to a very long debate and analysis over the conflict apparent in the School Committee operations, demonstrated in the last meeting's highly emotional disagreements and unprofessional behavior.

Continued discussion surrounding bullet point #9, and the possibility of adding clarifying language surrounding the appropriate handling of community concerns and public comments. Ms. Horgan asks to see language from other districts. The bullet point is revised to reflect the agreement of the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee*. There is some discussion regarding conflicting district policies, bylaws, and practices surrounding the public comment issue. *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* members agree that this is an issue that warrants the entire School Committee's input, and thus agree that the issue will not be resolved during the meeting this evening.

Ms. Siedzic points out a few areas where the School Committee Protocols conflict with existing protocols/policies, including public comment governance, tabling items to future meetings, and adding items to the agenda.

There is a very lengthy discussion regarding the format of the last School Committee meeting, with specific concerns voiced regarding the professionalism of the meeting, the negative impact the meeting created in the community, and the preventative measures the School Committee can take to avoid similar conflict in the future. Discussion regarding the need to develop a procedure for public comment and procedure for adding items to the School Committee agenda. Discussion regarding conflicting policies and unclear protocols. The discussion continues in an attempt to resolve conflicts and come to agreement about the intention and implementation of the protocols.

Discussion regarding district capacity, what falls within the School Committee's purview, and best practices for addressing conflict and disagreement in the future. Superintendent Banios repeatedly reiterates her concern that the tension and unprofessionalism exhibited in the last meeting will occur again in future meetings.

Regarding **bullet point #10**, which reads:

A School Committee meeting is a business meeting that is held in public – not a public meeting. The committee values communication between all stakeholders of the community and will make every effort to ensure meetings are effective and efficient. Comments made at a meeting that are not part of the agenda will be tabled to a future meeting.

Ms. Presser recommends striking all language in this bullet point, except for "School Committee members will make every effort to ensure meetings are effective and efficient".

Discussion regarding School Committee communications and protocols guiding what information/emails are forwarded to the entire committee. The Policy/Legislative Subcommittee agrees to the addition of this information, through the addition of **bullet point #14:**

If an individual School Committee member receives an email relevant to overall district policy or operations, they will forward the email to all school committee members and the district superintendent.

Ms. Siedzik recommends including two (2) protocols, as follows:

- (1) All voices and concerns of individual School Committee members shall be given equal weight and significance. We are all duly elected by our community and our perspectives are equally valid. No decisions shall be made about district policy or overall accountability without consideration and affirmation by the full School Committee.*
- (2) No School Committee member shall editorialize or diminish the concerns of another member. While disagreements and differences of opinion are sometimes expected, members shall not offer or introduce prejudicial or disparaging remarks about the questions or concerns raised by a fellow member.*

There is discussion regarding the potential redundancy with Ms. Siedzik's above recommendations. There is discussion about the importance of including reference to **equality** in the School Committee Protocols.

Bullet point #12 will now read:

The School Committee will demonstrate professional and collegial relations with one another. To this end, members will work to create trust and mutual respect between and among each other, the Superintendent, and the Administration, by treating everyone with dignity and respect, even in times of disagreement. All voices and concerns of individual School Committee members shall be given equal weight and significance.

Bullet point # 9, #10, and #12 are read aloud to reflect the revisions agreed upon. Bullet point #14 is a new bullet point and new material, but subsequently moved to bullet point #5 (thus also changing original bullet points 5-14 to 6-15).

The *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* again discusses the appropriate handling of community feedback, and policies/procedures governing the adding of items to meeting agendas. There is discussion and high tension disagreement surrounding the district's approach to hearing community feedback. The recent letter received from Dr. Jennifer Carr detailing family concerns about the education model serves as a point of contention - whether the district should devote resources to meeting the needs outlined, and best practices for communicating with the public in time of high tension.

Ms. Presser recommends that the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* review samples of policies regarding public comment and setting meeting agendas at their next meeting. Ms. Presser will disseminate these samples alongside a copy of Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District's current accepted *in -form* policies on these issues.

I MOVE THAT THE POLICY/LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMEND THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADOPT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROTOCOLS (#1-#14) AS

WRITTEN IN THE [EXHIBIT](#), AND WITH THE AGREED UPON CHANGES DISCUSSED THIS EVENING AND REFLECTED IN THE [REVISED DRAFT](#) DEVELOPED THIS EVENING, TO BE PRESENTED AT THE 10/21/2020 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING.

MOTION by Anna Siedzik; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Peter Wolczik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;
Anna Siedzik YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of three (3) members present.

Ms. Siedzik will revise the *School Committee Protocols* based on this evening's discussion, and will circulate the revised document to the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* and Superintendent Banios by this coming Friday. The second reading of the *School Committee Protocols* will take place at the next scheduled School Committee meeting on 10/21/2020 at 7:00 PM.

C. Religious Observance Policy

[Exhibit](#)

Discussion regarding the action needed regarding the *Religious Observance Policy* based on prior School Committee meeting minutes. There is some discussion regarding recollection of what action was needed, as well as discussion regarding opinions on recognizing religious preferences and rituals through the calendar and prescribed policy governing certain academic protections/expectations. Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary, reviews the minutes from the public hearing on 05/20/2020 that addressed the *Religious Observance Policy*. All *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* members agree to table this item until the next subcommittee meeting in order to allow for further clarification regarding the appropriate action needed.

5. Other items unanticipated by the Chair

No items unanticipated by the Chair.

6. Set Next Meeting Date

The next *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* meeting will be held on **Monday, 11/02/20 at 7:00 PM**, with the following agenda:

- Review Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District policies approved *in form* regarding public comment and adding agenda items;
- Review sample policies from other districts regarding public comment and adding agenda items;
- Revisit the *Religious Observance Policy* based on 05/08/20 public hearing on the issue;
- Revisit Weapons Policy;
- Confirm that no action is needed on district's Travel Policy;
- Review Policy Section IJND.

Superintendent Banios will ensure that the *Harassment (ACAB) Policy* as well as the *School Committee Protocols* appear on the 10/21/2020 School Committee meeting agenda.

7. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE POLICY/LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 10/14/2020 MEETING AT 10:07 PM.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Peter Wolczik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;
Anna Siedzik YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of three (3) members present.

Respectfully submitted November 29th, 2020 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.

Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A § 20, the public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting. The School Committee reserves the right to implement additional remote participation procedures and will notify the public of these procedures as soon as practicable. Please [click here](#) to read the Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20.

*Zoom App Information: If you plan to participate, download the [Zoom.com](#) application now. The option to download will also be available at the start of the meeting. When opening the Zoom App, select "Join Meeting" in the upper right corner and enter the meeting id: 965 9158 5860 and meeting password:550593. The community should ask questions via the "chat" function within the Zoom application during the Citizen's Comments section. During the Zoom meeting, participants will be given instructions on how to provide their comments. Unfortunately, we must limit the in-person conversations to just the Committee members. However, for the benefit of all, the School Committee meetings will be available on our local cable channel, HWCam, and [HWCam.org](#), for review a few hours after the meeting has ended. Members of the Public can access the meeting via [YouTube HWRSD live stream link](#) the next day.