

The Subcommittee on School Committee Policies met on Friday, October 25, 2024, in the Virtual Zoom Meeting. Present were Kathy Bent, Peter Goode, Sara Ahern, Kristen Harmon, Mary Beth Taylor, and Jen Kruczek.

Ms. Bent called the meeting to order at 1:00PM.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- Motion by Mr. Goode, seconded by Dr. Ahern, and the Committee voted, unanimously, to approve the meeting Minutes of August 12, 2024.

### **Review Policy JICFB (Bullying Prevention)**

- Ms. Bent stated this review came from a concern from a parent. When there is an accusation, the victim is protected. The parent stated there is little communication when the investigation is happening, and they thought there could be more.
- Ms. Taylor stated the procedures might address some of the parent's concerns.
- Dr. Ahern stated there is communication with herself or Ms. Taylor and immediate safety measures are put in place. They cannot go into details while facts are still being gathered. There can be status updates. As for documentation, there are expectations during the investigation and at its conclusion. This meeting is not the place to talk about specific cases.
- Ms. Taylor stated these practices are happening in the district. Assistant Principals call her about these cases. Parents are welcomed to reach out to her.
- Mr. Goode asked Caitlyn Eldredge about her email, and she spoke about the incident.
- Ms. Bent stated the policy is broad based and the procedures are more specific. She asked if there are different procedures at the different grade levels. Ms. Taylor stated it depends on the individual situation.
- Ms. Bent stated if there is an allegation against a teacher, that teacher would be removed. She asked if the district could do the same for a student.
- Dr. Ahern stated it depends on the facts of the situation. There may be a removal of the student who was the aggressor. There might be a no contact orders, additional adult supervision, separation of seats, a plan to pass in the hallways, etc.
- Ms. Taylor stated the bullying procedures are on the Student Services website. Dr. Ahern stated the law is prescriptive of the what the procedures need to be.
- The Committee discussed the procedures.

### **Review Policy JH (Student Attendance)**

- Dr. Ahern thanked Ms. Taylor for putting together the new attendance procedures aligned with the policy. The leadership team noted that it can be difficult with the line about "written documentation from an appropriately licensed professional or healthcare provider for all absences that are three or more consecutive days." She is recommending that it be removed.
- Mr. Goode stated his concern is that this is never going to happen if they may request the statement. He asked if five days of written documentation was more appropriate.
- Dr. Ahern stated in the procedures there are attendance meetings that are happening at the building. They are building in habits and following up on cases. ASPEN can flag circumstances. The model policy from MASC just has the first sentence with no timeframe on it.
- The Committee agreed to change the sentence to more than five consecutive days. Under excused and unexcused absences, they removed "written" and just have "an explanation."

### **Cell Phone Policy Discussion**

- Mr. Goode stated staff needs help with cell phones. He looked at Dennis-Yarmouth and Methuen policies and they put all the pressure on the teachers. This has to be led by the administration that there are no cell phones to be used during the school day.
- Ms. Bent stated if there is a district-wide policy that said there are no cell phones during the school day then there is accountability.
- Ms. Taylor stated in most bullying reports, a cell phone is involved. Whether it is in the planning stage or recording something.

- Dr. Ahern stated there are 1700 students and everyone has a cell phone and there are five Associate Principals. That is why the Yondr pouches have so much attention.
- Ms. Bent suggested developing a policy and seeing if it solves the problem. If the phones are seen, they are taken the first time. There would be no cell phones during the school day. The procedures would not be in the policy.
- Dr. Ahern shared sample survey questions for staff.

**Review Policies BEDH (Public Comment at School Committee Meetings) and BEDH-E (Guidelines for Public Comment)**

- Ms. Bent stated the Policy BEDH-E recommendations are from a webinar she attended to identify and limit public comment. She suggested to define citizen as Barnstable residents, staff members, family members, and students; and add that people cannot defer their time to another person.
- Ms. Bent spoke about the BEDH changes.
- Dr. Ahern stated public comment does not have a response from the School Committee. It is taken under advisement. If there is inaccurate information, the Superintendent or another expert could respond to that information, but not the School Committee members.

**Next Steps**

- Ms. Bent will send the revised policies to Ms. Kruczek for the School Committee meeting.

Motion by Mr. Goode, seconded by Dr. Ahern, and the Committee voted, unanimously, to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:27PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Kruczek  
Executive Assistant