



Old Rochester Regional School Committee Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

Junior High School Media Room

133 Marion Road, Mattapoisett, MA 02739

Hybrid via Zoom

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mary Beauregard, Marion School Committee (in-person), Cristin Cowles, Mattapoisett School Committee (in-person), Frances-Feliz Kearns, ORR School Committee (in-person), Margaret McSweeney, ORR School Committee (in-person), Joseph Pires, ORR School Committee (remote) and Joshua Trombly, Rochester School Committee (in-person).

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools (in-person), Jaime Curley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services (in-person), Paige L. Tobin, Attorney, Murphy, Lamere & Murphy, P.C. (remote) and Melissa Wilcox, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent (in-person).

MEETING TO ORDER at 4:31 p.m. by Ms. Kearns.

1. Approval of Minutes – October 10, 2024 Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from October 10, 2024 by Ms. Kearns

Second by Ms. McSweeney

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

Review Policy Recommendations

- Title IX

MASC has revised its model policies and related materials to reflect the US Department of Education's recent amendments to the regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in "Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance." These policies were reviewed by the District's legal team.

- Policy Revisions

- AC – Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment And Retaliation
- AC-R – Procedures for Responding to Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation
- ACA – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
- ACAB – Sexual Harassment

- Policies Added

- ACA-R – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex Under Title IX Including Sex-Based Harassment
- ACGA – Civil Rights Grievance Procedure
- ACGB – Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure

Superintendent Nelson explained that as discussed at the last Policy Subcommittee meeting, these Title IX policies were sent to the District's legal team for review. He introduced Attorney Tobin to update the

subcommittee members. Attorney Tobin explained that she was in attendance at this meeting to discuss these policies however about an hour ago, a federal judge in Kentucky issued a federal order that strikes the changes put forth in August. Attorney Tobin suggested holding these policies for now as the current policies in place are compliant with current Massachusetts State Law in order to let any further litigation take place along with any changes that could be put forward by the administration of the President taking office later this month. She added that protections do exist under Massachusetts Civil Rights statutes even though Title IX is in flux.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Kearns asked to confirm how long the current policies have been in place and to confirm the District is compliant with MA General Law. Attorney Tobin said the policies have been in place since at least 2020, but possibly earlier. She confirmed the District is compliant with MA General Law.

Motion to hold the Title IX policies as recommended by legal counsel by Ms. McSweeney
Second by Ms. Beauregard

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Old Rochester Regional School District and MA Superintendency Union #55 is working to update the Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention Plan. Stakeholder feedback has been solicited along with a review by the District's legal team. The Plan is presented to the Policy Subcommittee for review and final recommendation ahead of the Joint School Committee meeting.

Superintendent Nelson recommended reviewing the plan earlier in the agenda for Attorney Tobin to remain present. All members agreed. He shared that this was a non-voting item being shared with the subcommittee for any feedback. The policies within the plan are already reviewed and approved by the subcommittee and Joint School Committee. Dr. Curley explained the plan is to be reviewed biennially and has been shared with the administrative team, legal counsel, the school resource officers within the districts. It has also been shared in the Principal's weekly newsletter, the Superintendent's newsletter and the District's website along with a Google form for community member and stakeholder feedback. The plan was shared with the subcommittee for feedback. An open forum will be held later this month for the public to provide feedback in-person and the plan will be shared with each Police Department. The plan will also be shared with the Joint School Committee as an information item.

School Committee Feedback:

Mr. Trombly referenced page 18 under sexual harassment may need to be reviewed based on the ruling of the Federal Judge in Kentucky today. Attorney Tobin agreed – this may need to be revisited.

Review Community Member Requests of Policy Revision

Community Member Anne Fernandes of Rochester submitted recommendations for the Policy Subcommittee to review IHAMA – Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education and JJIB – Interscholastic Athletics.

Superintendent Nelson recommended reviewing the community member requests earlier in the agenda for Attorney Tobin to remain present. All members agreed. Superintendent Nelson explained the recommendations to IHAMA and JJIB came from community member Anne Fernandes.

School Committee Feedback:

In regards to IHAMA, Ms. Cowles questioned the reasoning for the recommended changes as current MA General Law is an opt-out as we have in our current policy and Ms. Fernandes recommendations appear to change the policy to be an opt-in. Superintendent Nelson shared no reason was provided when the recommendation were submitted via email. Attorney Tobin confirmed MA General Law is an opt-out

statue and she would recommend maintaining the current policy as is. The subcommittee discussed maybe incorporating extra reminders into PowerSchool for families and ensuring notification meets the obligation of the districts. Mr. Trombly added that Rochester Memorial School does a fantastic job of sharing the opt-out information with families and it is included in the student handbook.

Motion to not take any action on the proposed changes on policy IHAMA- Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education by Ms. Cowles

Second by Ms. Beauregard

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

School Committee Feedback:

In regards to JJIB recommendations from Ms. Fernandes, Ms. Cowles shared that she was trying to determine on her own the motivation for the changes. She reviewed the ORR student handbook and feels there is a lot of information in the handbook already that discusses rules for students being penalized which center around academics, tardiness, etc. She questioned if the recommended changes were based on a safety concern, that it would be handled between the student and coach and their relationship along with that of the parents/guardians. Ms. Kearns added that there is also contractual language to consider between the school and the coach. She added that families and students review the handbook and sign-off on it annually. Ms. Cowles shared in her experience with her own students, coaches are very well aware of, and protect, the safety of each athlete. Attorney Tobin advised not to adopt the language recommended, as it could be unenforceable under state civil right statutes. Ms. Cowles confirmed with the administration that a safety concern as discussed in the recommended changes has not taken place in the District. The administration confirmed.

Motion to reject the proposed changes to JJIB-Interscholastic Athletics by Ms. Kearns

Second by Ms. Cowles

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

Review Policy Recommendations (continued)

Section D – Fiscal Management

- **Policy Addition**

- **DN – Surplus Property**

Superintendent Nelson introduced this new policy, which stems from a recent situation at one of the elementary schools. Although current practice already includes school committee notification of items to be discarded, there is not a current policy. This policy is to guide internal procedures for item removal in accordance with local, state and federal regulations.

Motion to recommend policy DN – Surplus Property to the Joint School Committee by Ms. McSweeney

Second by Ms. Kearns

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

Section I – Instruction

MASC recommends changes to reflect the expanded use of technology both inside and outside the classroom. These policies were reviewed by the District's Technology team.

- **Policy Revisions**

- **IJNDB-E-1 Elementary School Acceptable Use Agreement**
 - **IJNDB-E-2 Secondary School Acceptable Use Agreement**
 - **IJNDB-E-3 Staff Acceptable Use Agreement**
 - **IJNDC – Internet Publication**

- Policy Deletion
 - **IJNDC-R Website Guidelines and Procedures for Approval**

IJNDB-E-1 Elementary School Acceptable Use Agreement, IJNDB-E-2 Secondary School Acceptable Use Agreement, and IJNDB-E-3 Staff Acceptable Use Agreement

Superintendent Nelson reminded the subcommittee that technology policies were recently reviewed with the Policy Subcommittee and Joint School Committee. The above policies were also reviewed during this time with the Technology Team and revised to update the language to match current forms used in PowerSchool.

School Committee Feedback:

Mr. Trombly inquired if the trusted adult mentioned IJNDB-E-1 is any adult the student trusts or specifically the ‘trusted adult’ activity in the schools as some families may elect not to participate in that activity. Superintendent Nelson confirmed it is any adult the student trusts, unrelated to the activity. The subcommittee recommended changing the language of son/daughter or child to student.

Motion to recommend policies IJNDB-E-1 Elementary School Acceptable Use Agreement, IJNDB-E-2 Secondary School Acceptable Use Agreement and IJNDB-E-3 Staff Acceptable Use Agreement to the Joint School Committee with the discussed changes by Ms. McSweeney

Second by Ms. Beauregard

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

IJNDC – Internet Publication

This policy also has recommended changes from the Technology Team to update the policy to current practice.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Kearns recommended spelling out the FERPA acronym in the policy.

Motion to recommend policy IJNDC – Internet Publication to the Joint School Committee with the discussed changes by Ms. Kearns

Second by Ms. Beauregard

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

Policy Deletion - IJNDC-R Website Guidelines and Procedures for Approval

This policy was also reviewed by the Technology Team. The important contents are covered in our current policy KDCB – District Website and Social Media and this is not a current policy with MASC.

Motion to recommend policy IJNDC-R Website Guidelines and Procedures for Approval for deletion to the Joint School Committee by Ms. Beauregard

Second by Ms. Kearns

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

Further Review Returning Policies

BDE – Subcommittees of the School Committee and BDF – Advisory Committees to the School Committee

At the October 2024 Policy Subcommittee meeting, the subcommittee reviewed these current policies for updates and Superintendent Nelson shared that the different school committee members have recently discussed the appointment of a chairperson to the subcommittees. The subcommittee agreed to bring draft options to review.

Superintendent Nelson reminded the subcommittee that these policies were discussed at the last Policy Subcommittee meeting to be revised to match the unique structure of the districts. Ms. McSweeney put together draft language and legal counsel agreed with the changes based on our structure.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Kearns stated the policy says organize ‘annually’ in section 2, but the subcommittees do not necessarily always meet annually. The subcommittee discussed and agreed to recommend the removal of the word ‘annually’.

Motion to recommend policy BDE – Subcommittees of the School Committee to the Joint School Committee and no changes to BDF – Advisory Committees to the School Committee by Ms. Kearns
Second by Ms. Beauregard

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

JJE – Student Fundraising Activities

This policy was recommended by the Policy Subcommittee on June 6, 2024 (and then approved by the Joint School Committee on June 20, 2024) with the discussion being the Policy Subcommittee will continue to review current practices and update the language accordingly.

Ms. McSweeney shared that she asked for this policy to be on the agenda, but upon further review, she supports the current language, as it is not in conflict with current practice.

Motion to recommend no changes to JJE- Student Fundraising Activities by Ms. McSweeney
Second by Ms. Kearns

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 5:32 p.m. by Ms. Cowles

Second by Ms. Kearns

Motion Carried: Beauregard: yes, Cowles: yes, Kearns: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes, Trombly: yes