

The Subcommittee on School Committee Policies met on Friday, May 30, 2025, in the Virtual Zoom Meeting. Present were Kathy Bent, Peter Goode, Sara Ahern, Chris Dwelley, Jason Conetta, and Jen Kruczek.

Ms. Bent called the meeting to order at 8:30AM.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Mr. Goode, seconded by Dr. Ahern, and the Committee voted, unanimously, to approve the meeting Minutes of February 14, 2025.

Revise Policy JJF (Student Activity Accounts Management)

- Mr. Dwelley stated that instead of dividing up the interest earned among the clubs, all the interest would go into one unassigned account and be used at the school's discretion (i.e. bonding, audit costs, etc.) This was recommended by the Collins Center review.
- Mr. Goode asked if any club would have an issue with this change. Mr. Dwelley stated the Hawk's Nest, the school store, has the greatest interest. A lot of districts do it this way. The School Committee could still vote to take the money from the accounts for an audit. The Committee agreed.

Discussion on a Cell Phone Policy

- Ms. Bent stated she heard from teachers at the high school. The Committee put a pause on this policy when Brooke Styche came to public comment at a School Committee meeting and asked for it to be paused. Ms. Bent spoke to Ms. Styche and she said she was waiting for the School Committee to proceed with the policy. Mr. Conetta stated things are going better at the high school with cell phones.
- Mr. Conetta stated having no cell phones from bell to bell would be a big change for the students. In Brockton, the biggest thing they heard was the prep over the summer for the kids. Parents and guardians bring up the what ifs and make it a big deal. He thinks the community needs a platform to bring their concerns about a cell phone policy. The student's concerns come from their parents and guardians. The cell phone policy is going as good as the staff is implementing it. The biggest issue is the teacher implementation. Yondr bags take away that issue, but are expensive.
- Ms. Bent stated the Committee is looking to have a district policy and then each grade level can figure out how to handle it. She hears a mix of take the phones away 100% to allowing the students to have some self-control. A School Committee policy would give the principals more direction at the schools.
- Dr. Ahern stated the policy the Committee came up with allows for student handbooks to dictate the use in the buildings. It helps the elementary principals with the watches the kids are wearing.
- Mr. Conetta stated there are cell phones, but there is no iron fist. Not all staff are adhering to the handbook policy. He asked how the Committee builds a policy to remove the issue of staff not wanting to follow the policy. The staff need to be held accountable.
- Ms. Bent asked how the schools get the staff to buy in.
- Mr. Conetta suggested for the month of September, administrators become the phone police and set examples of the staff.
- Dr. Ahern asked Mr. Conetta an estimated percentage of compliance of staff enforcement. Mr. Conetta stated 2/3 of staff hold students accountable.
- Ms. Bent agreed that setting a tone on day one of what will and will not be tolerated. It will be more work in the beginning, but it will pay off. Mr. Goode thought Mr. Conetta was handling this well this year.
- Mr. Conetta stated they have the summer to create this policy.
- Ms. Bent would like to hear the concerns of the teachers.
- Mr. Conetta suggested stating at the June School Committee meeting that the School Committee and Superintendent are going to poll staff to hear what the issues are around cell phones. Ask if they are adhering to the handbook policy and in what way. Ask what are the challenges are they are seeing in their classroom. Ask if students should have their cell phones during passing time and cafeteria time.
- Ms. Bent agreed to polling the staff. She will mention this at the School Committee meeting next week.
- Dr. Ahern stated this is moving in right direction. There is some management that staff has to do. There is a bigger conversation about how instructional time is used.

Next Steps

- Ms. Bent will mention the poll to staff during the School Committee Subcommittee comments.

- Mr. Goode stated he would like to discuss a homework policy at the next meeting. Ms. Bent stated they may have to include a poll about homework for staff.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:28AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Kruczek
Executive Assistant