

The Subcommittee on School Committee Policies met on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, in the Virtual Zoom Meeting. Present were Kathy Bent, Peter Goode, Sara Ahern, Kristen Harmon, Jason Conetta, and Jen Kruczek.

Ms. Bent called the meeting to order at 2:02PM.

Discussion on a Cell Phone Policy

- The Committee discussed the results of the survey.
- Mr. Conetta stated nothing on the survey was a shock. They seem to want zero tolerance and using bags for the cell phones. He still thinks the issue is compliance. Staff said there are inconsistencies. He believes some teachers are following the policy and others are not. More than half the teachers do not want cell phones anywhere, not even in the hallways. He thinks the inconsistencies are with the teacher enforcement.
- Mr. Conetta stated in Brockton, an issue was the perception from the community. There has not been a forum for parents and guardians. During the month of September, they would need to be policing the policy with students and teachers.
- Ms. Bent stated once there is a districtwide policy, then the faculty and staff will have to be on board with compliance. The specific actions and consequences are better in the handbook. They can be adjusted without going through the School Committee for approval.
- Mr. Goode stated Nantucket recently went to no phones bell to bell. He asked if Mass is going to pass a law about no phones bell to bell. Dr. Ahern stated there is a proposed law for all Mass schools to have no cell phones bell to bell.
- The Committee looked at the draft policy.
- Ms. Bent suggested sending out the draft policy to staff stating this is the policy that will be on the July 23 School Committee meeting agenda.

Discussion on a Homework Policy

- The Committee discussed the survey on homework.
- Ms. Bent believed there was a homework policy previously in the district. The Student Envoys reported how hard it was to keep up with the homework. This is a learned skill that kids are missing out on in the younger grades and the high school students are not prepared.
- Mr. Goode stated the Committee's goal is to make the academics stronger and homework is a valuable skill.
- Mr. Conetta stated an argument will be the family does not have time to do it.
- Ms. Bent stated when she hears the equity argument, she believes those students that do not have the support at home are the students that need the most help to have that skill. Teachers should have the flexibility to assign more homework in classes where it is needed, such as AP classes.
- Mr. Conetta stated there is feedback from students saying they were not being pushed enough.
- Ms. Bent suggested putting some study halls back into the schedule.
- Mr. Goode stated Wilmington Public Schools has a really good policy.
- Ms. Bent stated she will come up with draft language.
- Dr. Ahern stated she will share that draft language with staff. The survey had no strong consensus. There were not a lot of responses on the open responses section.
- Mr. Goode stated the School Committee believes that homework should be given on a consistent basis. It could be more about the philosophy.
- Dr. Ahern stated Marlboro's policy is straight forward. She liked the idea of having a policy to send a message that Barnstable is focusing on academics.
- Ms. Bent stated the first draft will be on the July 23 School Committee meeting agenda.

Review Policy IKF (Graduation Requirements)

- Dr. Ahern stated she does not have guidance yet from the state, but will soon. She attended a webinar with the DESE Commissioner. There will be new regulations with competency determination. They will need to show that mastery has been accomplished in certain subjects with exams or capstone projects. The Class of 2026 needs to have completed certain classes in Math, English, and Science. The Class of 2027 will have US History added to that list. A competency determination policy will be needed. DESE will collect and audit these policies. The appeals process will happen locally. They will clarify what can be done with previous students and pathways towards diplomas.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Mr. Goode seconded by Dr. Ahern, and the Committee voted, unanimously, to approve the meeting Minutes of May 30, 2025.

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

Meeting adjourned at 3:05PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Kruczek
Executive Assistant