

POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

October 7, 2010

A Policy Subcommittee meeting was held on Thursday, October 7, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room. Present were: Mrs. Dwyer, Ms. Isola, Mrs. Mahoney, Mrs. Lebo, Mr. McCarthy and Mrs. Bragg, Chair. Also present were: Dr. DeCristofaro, Mrs. Joann Morrissey, Mr. James Rendle, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Mr. Mike Draicchio, Ms. Sarah Dunphey and Mrs. Burrelli, Clerk.

This meeting was called to order by Mrs. Bragg. The first order of business was Waivers and Verification of Income. The Committee asked Mrs. Joanne Morrissey what the procedure was to evaluate the free and reduced applications, as these are also used to determine waivers for Athletic fees and Transportation fees.

Mrs. Morrissey explained that they can't assume anything. They verify 3% of the applications. This year, they will have processed 1,400 applications. Another 1,400 came in by direct certification from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Also, anybody who is receiving SNAP is automatically approved. Last year we had 700 forms. It has doubled this year. As of October 1, there are 1,282 applications on file and 1,400 from the state. Out of that, 152 were denied and 37 applications were selected for verification. She passed out a copy of the form. Women, Infants & Children (WIC) is a federal grant. This is slightly higher than the reduced and free lunches. These people still have to apply. Last year we had 1,281 free and 771 reduced.

Mrs. Morrissey said they ask for verification, pay stubs, a letter from an employee, Social Security numbers, retirement benefit letter, unemployment and tax returns if you are self employed, or a brief note if they don't have any money.

The 3% maximum is a Federal guideline. You can't select more than that for Free and Reduced lunch. The members were amazed that no documentation is required.

Mr. Jim Rendle said they do the same for Athletics if somebody wants to get a waiver. Coaches do not approve waivers. We will forward (30) of these forms to Mrs. Morrissey asking for permission to see if they qualify for free and reduced lunch. Also, Transportation uses this letter.

Mr. Draicchio said that Transportation forwards the letter and Mrs. Joanne Morrissey approves it and sends it back to him. This is a new procedure this year for Athletics and Transportation. Also, there is a Massachusetts state law that if a student is on free and reduced lunch, they also get free transportation.

Mrs. Morrissey did say that if they believe somebody is lying, they can verify for cause. If we deny somebody and they provide new information, we ask them to prove it.

Mrs. Morrissey will create a flow chart summary for the Committee and get a copy of the regulations for them. Food Services are still in the process of collecting applications until October 31. As of now there are 621 students that have not renewed. They look at the end of October as a guide line benchmarks.

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Mr. Kevin Mulvey and Ms. Maura Tanaglia worked on a revised Anti-bullying policy. Mr. Mulvey said he took the School Committee policy and reflected and followed the new law. The new law expanded the requirements. He stuck to the law and followed the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education policy. They are guidelines. Cities and towns don't have to use them, but DESE recommends we use it.

The members also received a new "Bullying Incident Report Form."

The members went over the Draft Anti Bullying policy from. With regard to reporting the incident, the members discussed making it mandatory that principals fill out the form. They then considered having anyone fill out the form. They then discussed what level is it severe enough that you would want to fill out a form. They felt that this report should be mandated at any level. Some members felt that teachers will be less likely to report an incident they see if they have to fill out a report.

Ms. Isola asked if it had to be in writing. Mr. Mulvey said no. She then asked if they wanted to create a policy that is more stringent. She would want to see the principal make a report that this concern has come to his/her attention.

Mrs. Roberts said that if a teacher does see something, he/she will report it to someone. Then it is followed up. We documented when we meet with a child. We document every claim or complaint.

Sarah Dunphey said that all staff working in the schools should know the guidelines. The Superintendent said that all the Student Support people are being trained.

The Committee asked about the harassment and internet policies. Mrs. Burrelli will look those up and forward them to the members.

After much discussion the members decided to copy the law but have different procedures. We will adopt Mass General Laws and put our requirements in the procedures.

The Superintendent stated that they are working on the procedures. Mr. Mulvey will rework the policy and get back to the committee. He will also check on the internet policy and the harassment policy.

At the end of October, the Superintendent will update the Committee with the plan.

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The next order of business was Naming of QPS schools and places. Mrs. Bragg said we should have a more formal process. This should include naming of rooms within the school building. Mrs. Bragg passed out a copy of the Park & Recreation Board Facility Dedication Policy and Criteria. Mr. McCarthy thought this was too involved.

We do have a policy (File 6.4) and it states “The School Committee will be responsible for naming all school buildings.” Mrs. Bragg said she wanted to expand the policy and add:

“and all property under the jurisdiction of the School Committee including but not limited to rooms within school buildings.”

The members decided to consider this but left this issue in subcommittee.

On a motion by Mrs. Lebo, seconded by Ms. Isola, the Policy Subcommittee adjourned at 5:34 p.m.