

SCHOOL POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 19, 2012

A meeting of the School Policy Subcommittee was held on Monday, March 19, 2012 at 4:30 pm in the Superintendent's Conference Room on the 3rd floor of the NAGE Building. Present were Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. David McCarthy, and Mr. Paul Bregoli, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mrs. Colleen Roberts, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Mr. Keith Segalla, Dr. Earl Metzler, Mr. Frank Santoro, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by Mr. Bregoli.

The Superintendent called the roll and Mrs. Lebo and Mayor Koch were absent.

The first item on the agenda was a discussion of the Community Service Pilot. The motion was introduced by Mrs. Bragg at December 14, 2011 meeting and referred to subcommittee for review and discussion. Mr. McCarthy asked about high school clubs that require already Community Service (National Honors Society and ROTC). He also has questions about who will monitor the community service and what happens when someone doesn't complete it. Do we really hold them back from graduating? What's the probability of 100% participation? Mrs. Mahoney asked about students who transfer from other school districts without hours or are in alternative programs. Often those students have many hurdles to completing their education.

Mr. Bregoli suggested that if we have a certain number of hours per year, a student who transfers in as a junior would have to complete that year's work and the next year's as well. The freshman and sophomore requirements would be waived, or they could receive credit for work performed under another school system's requirements. Mr. Santoro feels every student should do community service, but mentioned the volume of Quincy Public Schools students (3,000) plus the local private school students all competing for the same opportunities. Ms. Isola is in favor of mandated community service and said we have to assume that children with complicated backgrounds will rise to the challenge.

Dr. Metzler suggested that all students should have the same expectations. If we make community service a requirement, we give the special populations the option to participate. If we raise the bar, most students will reach for it. On the other hand, we can't allow community service to be the reason someone doesn't get a high school diploma.

In terms of managing the community service, Dr. DeCristofaro suggested that the School Committee consider a stipend for the person(s) who manages this at each school. If this was part of budget considerations, and the staff members had authority and were compensated, it might help with the transition. There was discussion about the appropriate number of students one staff member could monitor, and suggestions ranged from the deans to homeroom teachers to class advisors. All agreed it would be easier to carefully monitor a small group of students and this is something that will need to be negotiated. Mr. Santoro reiterated that we must carefully define what Community Service is; Amesbury

has good definitions (see packet). Dr. DeCristofaro said that as we will have to find the students placements as well, so the job is communication with the students and with the community.

Mr. McCarthy suggested that City Solicitor Timmins be consulted about whether there were any legal issues with adding this as a requirement. Mr. Bregoli asked if we could find out if other cities and towns who have already implemented this have had legal challenges. Ms. Isola reiterated that this is a plus for a student's resume and that we can learn from the other communities who have already implemented this.

Mr. McCarthy asked that there be further discussion of specifics about the pros and cons of implementing this in each high school. It is a great, positive idea but we need to take the time to make a good plan that can be smoothly implemented. Ms. Isola reminded everyone that it is important when we implement this, that we do it properly. We need to be sure of what we are doing. She also asked if the Superintendent or either of the principals have relationships with other superintendents or high school principals to ask about their implementation process and what lessons they could share. Dr. Metzler pointed out that many communities have only one high school, so some work will be required by Quincy to set up parallel programs at the two high schools. Dr. DeCristofaro reiterated that by offering the monitors a stipend, it makes those staff members accountable to the School Committee and makes underscores the seriousness of the endeavor.

Dr. DeCristofaro proposed working with the high school principals to gather information from other communities and to draft a proposal for School Committee to review with City Solicitor Timmons. The subcommittee can meet again in April to review the draft proposal. Mr. Bregoli concluded the discussion by confirming that the Community Service pilot will remain in subcommittee to allow for additional research.

The next item on the agenda was Substitute Teacher Hiring and Evaluations practices. Mr. Mulvey explained that the minimum requirements for becoming a substitute teacher include completing the required paperwork (including providing identification and passing the CORI background check) and providing references. In terms of credentials, a minimum of 60 college credits or an Associates' Degree is required. Once the required documentation is completed, substitute's names and contact information are added to the master list (with an indication that they are new). The updated list is shared with principals and department heads monthly. Substitutes are paid \$75 per day; after 21 days, they get paid \$85 per day as long term substitutes. The current list has 336 on it, 33 have long-term assignments. 89 substitutes have Master's degrees and 201 have Bachelor's degrees; the balance have Associate's degrees or the 60 college credit minimum (and may be active students). It is very hard to find certified Special Education substitutes, so we often employ students. There is no in-person interview or evaluation process except for long-term substitutes. For long-term substitutes, we do require certification or verification that they are in the process of completing the requirements for certification (may not have completed the MTEL, for example). The vetting process is done by principals, assistant principals, department chairs. In the case of extreme deficiencies, Mrs. Roberts and/or Mr. Mulvey are notified. After an interview with the substitute, he or she may be removed from the list, usually due to unacceptable classroom management skills.

Mrs. Roberts explained that for long-term substitutes, principals notify her of upcoming medical or maternity leaves. Mrs. Roberts usually recommends people she has met and interviewed for these positions and principals often have suggestions for these positions as well. Being a long-term substitute is a good way to get exposure if there is a goal of getting a permanent position. Some substitutes aren't interested in becoming full-time teachers, while others are retired teachers who substitute, often in particular buildings.

Ms. Isola asked about formal evaluation of substitute teachers and whether we should be looking at creating something that principals or grade level team members would complete or is current process working? Mrs. Roberts clarified that in elementary and middle schools, principals and assistant principals check in with substitutes and teachers in adjacent rooms for feedback. In high schools, assistant principals and department chairs handle this and the informal process seems to work well. Dr. DeCristofaro said that most principals have their own list of preferred substitutes who they utilize at every opportunity. Ms. Isola said it sounds like the current process is working. Mr. McCarthy agreed, saying he is not hearing of issues with quality of substitutes. Mrs. Roberts agreed, department heads and teachers feel comfortable saying to principals when someone is not working out. Another thing to remember is that student teachers often become substitutes, so principals and teachers are already familiar with them in that context.

Mrs. Hubley expressed concern about the low number of certified Special Education substitute teachers. Dr. DeCristofaro agreed, saying this was an area of concern, along with high school foreign languages and science. Mr. Bregoli asked if any other school systems had a substitute teacher interview and evaluation process. Mrs. Roberts replied that Boston Public Schools has a dedicated staff person to review applications and interview candidates.

Ms. Isola thanked everyone for providing the information they did and moved to remove the item from the School Policy Subcommittee. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion, and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

North Quincy High School students Tessie McGough and Melissa Ma asked to be recognized and expressed their support of the community service pilot. Ms. McGough also would like to see CPR certification be added as a graduation requirement; this item will be added to the School Policy Subcommittee for review and discussion.

Ms. Isola made a motion to adjourn the School Policy Subcommittee meeting at 5:50 pm. Mrs. Mahoney seconded the motion, and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.