

SCHOOL POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 26, 2011

A meeting of the School Policy Subcommittee was held on Monday, September 26, 2011 at 4:15 pm in the Superintendent's Conference Room. Present were Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. Dave McCarthy, and Mrs. Jo-Ann Bragg, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mrs. Colleen Roberts, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Mike Draicchio, Mrs. Maura Papile, Ms. Judy Todd, Mrs. Maria Anastasi, Ms. Ellen Garofalo, Ms. Ellen Hunter, Mrs. Jane Kisielius, and Ms. Laura Owens, Acting Clerk. Also present were Ms. Jill Gichuhi and Ms. Linda Perry.

The meeting was called to order at 4:18 pm by Mrs. Bragg.

After the Call to Order and Opening Remarks by Dr. DeCristofaro, the next item on the agenda was the Health Services Program Improvement Plan. Mrs. Kisielius reviewed the Health Services missing statement, Organizational Chart, and staffing. Each school has an experienced, full-time school nurse; in addition, Snug Harbor has a part-time school nurse for the preschool and the two high schools have paraprofessionals. All nursing staff hold dual licenses from the state of Massachusetts as nurses and from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). School nurses have many responsibilities, including student and parent interactions, daily medication administration, first aid, illness assessment, helping families manage chronic conditions and life-threatening allergies, as well as annual screenings for hearing, posture, and vision required by the Department of Public Health (DPH). There were 138,925 nursing interventions last year in the Quincy Public Schools. In addition, school nurses provide health education, reinforce self-care with students through regular classroom presentations, and hold staff inservices. One new program this year were presentations on dental hygiene in Grades 2, 6, and 7. Documentation is a key piece of school nursing; SNAP system helps nurses keep track of information and generates reports.

For this year, the nursing staff plans to hold flu clinics for middle and high school students and all staff. The DPH is not giving vaccines this year for staff, but student vaccinations will still be free.

This year's goals are a continuation of last year's: updating the medication self-administration policy; responding to the new head injury/concussion regulations (all nurses and coaches have been trained, next step will be working in increasing parent and student awareness, especially in terms of self-reporting; may utilize PTO and/or Booster Club meetings as presentation venue); updating of evaluation standards in conjunction with DESE's new regulations (this will be integrated with the Ad Hoc Subcommittee's work on new educator evaluation regulations). Also will be working on coordinating wellness team activities system-wide; presently, some sites are more active than others (a report on this topic was requested).

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. McCarthy made a motion to accept the Health Services Program Improvement Plan. Ms. Isola seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

The fourth item on the agenda was the Special Education Program Improvement Plan. Ms. Todd reviewed progress towards last year's goals, especially the new core ELA and supplemental Math for middle school that are fully implemented for this school year. She cited the success of the Orton Gillingham program (every elementary school has one certified or soon to be certified teacher and every middle school has one or more certified teachers) and the new Lexia (computer-based) program that is being used in resource rooms, allowing teachers to utilize small-group instruction strategies when they have more than three students in a class. In terms of staff, the LDC staff is very strong and results support this. Another goal from last year successfully implemented was the awareness of the new Anti-bullying regulations and implications for SPED students; IEPs are reflecting needs of these students.

In a review of the MCAS data and growth model (preliminary scores), Ms. Todd noted that Middle School math is a major concern, but the numbers are moving in the right direction. Professional development money through SPED grant will be focused on this area, as well as online coursework, DSAC support (for both SPED and regular education teachers). The goal is to build content knowledge base for middle school SPED teachers. High school math scores are showing impressive growth. The Read 180 test was used with poor results due to lack of student effort; results not reflective of classroom performance.

For 2011-12, the goals are focused on Standards 3 and 5: implementation of Lexia, understanding of updated regulations. Visualizing and Verbalizing training was completed; LIPS will be completed in the spring. QPAC goals are the same as last year, with new action steps. An overview will be presented at the first QPAC meeting in October. The Disability Book was a cooperative effort between QPAC and SPED team; can be used for all levels of school.

After some discussion about minor changes to language to strengthen meaning, Mrs. Lebo made a motion to accept the Special Education Program Improvement Plan. Ms. Lebo seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mrs. Mahoney departed the meeting at 5:30 pm.

The fifth item on the agenda was the Transportation Program Improvement Plan. Mr. Draicchio gave an overview of the plan, which focuses on the safe transportation of 1,044 Quincy Public School students (regular and Special Education) every day. He cited School Safety Officers Lisa Devine and Steve Burgio as keys to the department's success, the Quincy Police Department's assistance in assessing problem areas with school dropoff and pickup, DARE officers also helping with dismissal. The schools' traffic supervisors (crossing guards) are integral as well.

Mr. Draicchio highlighted changes in the Transportation Department staffing, introducing Maria Anastasi, who recently joined the staff as Transportation Administrative Assistant, after serving in that role on an interim basis. There is a new dispatcher, Laurie Cook (former bus monitor and bus driver) who also has experience with bus inspections. Carol Shaughnessy has provided professional staff development for both drivers and monitors and there are now two full-time bus mechanics (up from 1.5 in previous years).

The Transportation Administration team is made up of staff from Transportation, Special Education, and Student Support Services and focuses on the needs of the various student populations transported. The Transportation maintenance team focuses on issues relating to maintenance, inspections, and working with the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Mr. Draicchio shared the materials distributed to the drivers at their recent summer orientation: handbooks for students with disabilities, bus driver's handbook, bus monitor handbook, policy manual on student bus conduct. All drivers and monitors are on the Instant Alert System. At the orientation, Mrs. Kisielius did a presentation on First Aid, working with school nurses, bullying prevention and intervention. Ms. Todd, Mr. Mulvey, and a representative from the RMV presented as well. Other issues discussed included safety and security; bus conduct reports; communication with principal or assistant principal as necessary; inspection of buses, citing any issues no matter how small so the maximum number of buses are able to be deployed at all times.

For the 2011-2012 school year, the goals are focused on professional development, including inservice training and raising awareness of need to communicate with school personnel (nurse, principal, assistant principal); better communication with staff, outside vendors about expectations; CORIs completed annually, including for outside vendors. Student safety is the ultimate goal. Last year's goals of creating student identification tags implemented, privacy issues dealt with by placement inside bags; information about medication being shared by school nurses.

After some remarks and discussion about the positive progress of this department, Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Transportation Program Improvement Plan. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

The sixth item on the agenda was the Information Technology Program Improvement Plan. Mr. Keith Segalla presented the plan, giving an overview of the plan, a 3-year comprehensive plan through November 2012. The staff are waiting for guidance from DESE to begin the revision process for the next comprehensive plan cycle. After reviewing the mission statement and staff overview, Mr. Segalla highlighted the change in the IT tech's schedule: middle schools have support for whole day per week, while the high schools have been reduced to four days. Most elementary schools get ½ day per week.

Last year's goals of increasing technology were met with a number of purchases and donations installed over the summer. Office 2010 was installed on 2,700 computers system-wide. There was some discussion about email issues: QPS email addresses receiving outside emails, security of QPS emails vs. other email sources. The City's goal is to have a new email system in place for 2012. Mr. Segalla also reviewed the work the IT department does with coordinating the Secretaries' Team and communicating with DESE for state data filing requirements (52 elements including full schedules, final grades). In the coming year, Starbase will be replaced by newer version called SIS. Electronic versions of report cards and progress reports are available in this system as future option. Report of comments feature usage in current module was requested and will be run after first term progress reports are completed.

After some discussion of budget and the cost of meeting goals in the Instructional Technology Program Improvement Plan, a request was made to add a budget page to each Program Improvement Plan. Mrs. Lebo made a motion to approve the Instruction Technology Program Improvement Plan and Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

All agenda items having been discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.