

School Committee Policy Review Subcommittee
Thursday, March 17, 2016
8:30 AM – 10:00 AM
5th Floor Conference, Town Hall

Policy Review Subcommittee members present: Dr. Jackson (Chairman), Mr. Glover, and Ms. Stone.

School Staff present: Dr. Shmukler, Ms. O’Sullivan, and Ms. Coyne.

Others present: Ms. Correa.

1) Approval of the Minutes of the December 9, 2015 Policy Review Subcommittee Meeting

On a motion of Mr. Glover and seconded by Ms. Stone, the Policy Review Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2015 Policy Review Subcommittee meeting.

2) Continuation of Review of Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) Physical Restraint Policy

The School Committee discussed possible changes (prone restraint and applicability to non-PSB personnel, e.g., police officers) to the Interim Physical Restraint Policy approved on December 17, 2015 (Attachment A).

Dr. Shmukler stated that the staff does not use prone restraint. She and the staff in the schools are in agreement that it should not be done in the schools. Dr. Shmukler described the physical restraint training requirements for staff and noted that the two new specialists in the RISE Program will be highly trained.

The Subcommittee agreed with Dr. Shmukler. Dr. Jackson will draft revised language that specifically prohibits use of prone restraint.

On a motion of Mr. Glover and seconded by Ms. Stone, the Policy Review Subcommittee voted to recommend that the School Committee vote to amend the PSB Physical Restraint Policy to prohibit the use of prone restraint.

A 1st Reading of the policy change will be scheduled for April 14, 2016 and a 2nd reading/vote will be planned for April 28, 2016. The draft policy will be posted on the School Webpage.

The Subcommittee then discussed whether language should be added that specifically refers to non-school public safety personnel. A Police/School Agreement was adopted by the School Committee on February 2, 1989. The Agreement was removed from the PSB Discipline Policy when the Policy was amended on March 12, 2015. The February 5, 2015 School Committee Record stated the following: *The Police/School Agreement, dating from 1989, is no longer reflective of arrangements in place. We are awaiting more direction from the state on the requirements it will expect with the passage last year of Ch. 284: An Act Relative to the Reduction of Gun Violence, which talks about “School Resource Officers.” Without further guidance from the state, it seems like we will need to wait to revise this section.*

The Subcommittee discussed establishing preferences (rather than policies) for non-school staff, e.g., police officers, who might respond to incidents in schools. The Subcommittee discussed whether this issue should be a section of the PSB Restraint Policy or a separate policy. Barring a life threatening situation, outside personnel should try to work with on-site school staff who would understand a student's particular issues. The Subcommittee would like to figure out the best way to address the relationship between non PSB personnel relative to safety and working and PSB personnel on campus. The next step will be to review the existing Police/School Agreement. Dr. Shmukler stated that the schools have ongoing engagement with the Police Department. The police officers do extensive safety behavior training as part of community policing.

3) New Business

Ms. O'Sullivan and Ms. Correa referred to the October 26, 2010 letter from the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, which clarifies the relationship between bullying and discriminatory harassment (Attachment B). The letter reminds schools that by limiting responses to a specific application of any anti-bullying or other disciplinary policy, they may fail to properly consider whether the student misconduct also results in discrimination in violation of students' federal civil rights. Ms. O'Sullivan and Ms. Correa suggested reviewing our policies, procedures and student handbooks to ensure that they are up-to-date and consistent. We should look at issues such as student and staff training, investigations, data keeping, and look at best practices from other districts. We might want to have one policy, but different, more tailored sets of procedures. School Committee members suggested placing all the related policies (e.g., Section A2. Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity; Section G6-Safe School-Personnel; Section J6 Safe Schools-Students; Section J7 Bullying Prevention; Section 504; Title VI, Title IX) in one new section of the Policy Manual. In some cases, we need to include procedures in the Policy Manual. Ms. Correa will review our existing policies. Ms. O'Sullivan will prepare drafts on Title VI and Title IX. The Town has an anti-discrimination policy. Ms. Coyne will look at the framework of the Policy Manual. On April 14, 2016, the Subcommittee will continue discussion of these policies and look at the Policy Manual framework and index.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.