

School Committee Policy Review Subcommittee
Thursday, May 12, 2016
8:00 AM – 9:45 AM
5th Floor Conference, Town Hall

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

Other School Committee Members Present: Ms. Charlupski and Ms. Stram.

School Staff Present: Ms. Dunn and Ms. Coyne.

Others Present: Craig Haller.

1) Approval of the Minutes of the April 14, 2016 Policy Review Subcommittee Meeting

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Mr. Glover, the Policy Review Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2016 Policy Review Subcommittee meeting.

2) Review of Proposed Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) Policies on Financial Assistance and Student Fees, Fines and Charges

The Committee discussed the proposed PSB Policy on Student Fees, Fines and Charges (Attachment A). State law requires that districts establish a policy. Procedures will be documented in an Administrative Guide.

Delete student transportation and kindergarten from the list of examples; list related policies, e.g., the Student Residency Policy, at the end of the Policy; reformat the policy so that it is consistent with our other policies; include a preamble; change “children” to “students” in the first paragraph; add expectations for notification.

The procedures will set the expectation that fees will be collected prior to participation in activities. In some cases, payment plans will be set up. Add “except for as otherwise specified or authorized by the Superintendent or designee.” The language should set the expectations, but not be so rigid that it prohibits participation.

Add Summer School to the list; note the expectation that students and parents/guardians will know what to anticipate for fees for the year; specify who is responsible for notifying parents (school, district, both); specify how student trip fees are calculated (There is an expectation fees for field trips will be set in accordance with...); consider family caps; may need to revisit the Student Field Trip Policy; cross reference this policy with related policies, e.g., the Student Field Trip Policy; add language on who has the right to establish fees (written authorization from principal/headmaster and notification to the Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance); note the expectation that there will be clear notification to parents/guardians; reformat the policy so that it is consistent with our other policies; include a preamble.

The Committee discussed the proposed PSB Financial Assistance Policy (Attachment B). The Committee discussed whether we need a policy or if this could be covered by a program. Ms. Dunn reported that Lexington and Weston have both a policy and a program.

Discussed whether fees should be charged for curriculum related activities. What are the budget implications? Discussed whether we should establish an annual budget allocation or revolving fund to provide financial assistance. The policy could provide the parameters. What is the potential cost? Will centralized fee collection cover the cost? Discussed adding wording that the School Committee requires that all students have equitable access to programs even those with a fee and to that end the PSB shall provide financial assistance to families or a mechanism for providing financial assistance. The School Committee should have a robust discussion on this issue. We could move forward with simultaneously developing a policy and a program for financial assistance. The School Finance Subcommittee supported the concept of developing a financial assistance program, but we still need data.

Reorganize the list of eight program goals (4 and 6 should be expectations). Should there be an appeal process? Include what a family can expect in in terms of notification and process. Revise Program Goal 4. Information on financial assistance documents will be translated and we will need to work with community groups. The policy should set an expectation that efforts will be made to notify all families regardless of cultural or language background.

Both policies will be previewed at the May 19, 2016 School Committee meeting.

Mr. Glover and Ms. Stone will review and edit the proposed Meal Charge Policy. We need this policy in place by the end of the school year. Ms. Dunn will ask the auditor whether the policy can specifically state that we will not deny food for non-payment.

The Committee agreed to add a meeting on Thursday, June 2, 2016, 8:00 AM-9:30 AM in the 5th Floor Conference Room. The agenda will include continuation of review of the Financial Policies. The Committee will also review the proposed PSB Anti-Bullying, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies. Members should send any questions on the proposed drafts to Dr. Jackson and Ms. Correa.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.