

School Committee Policy Review Subcommittee  
Monday, March 30, 2020  
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM  
Remote Meeting

Policy Review Subcommittee members present: Michael Glover (Chair), Sharon Abramowitz, Jennifer Monopoli, and David Pearlman.

Other School Committee members present: Suzanne Federspiel.

School Staff present: Ben Lummis, Nicole Gittens, and Robin Coyne.

Others present: Andy Liu, Mark Levy, Bob Miller, and Marty Farlow.

**1) Approval of Minutes**

On a motion of Mr. Glover and seconded by Dr. Abramowitz, the Policy Review Subcommittee voted unanimously (by roll call) to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2020 Policy Review Subcommittee meeting.

**2) Discussion of Student Field Trip Policy**

The Subcommittee reviewed the March 30, 2020 Draft Student Field Trip Policy (Attachment A).

The Subcommittee discussed the following draft language: *Reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure that Field Trip participants reflect the diversity of the PSB's student population.* It was noted that some field trips are organized by certain school groups. While the district tries to ensure diversity in all school groups, some groups do not reflect the school population's diversity level. Mr. Glover will review the draft language.

The Subcommittee discussed the following draft language: *No student shall be denied participation in a Field Trip because of financial inability to pay the fee or costs associated with the Field Trip. School leaders, students and groups may engage in reasonable fundraising efforts to defray the cost of a Field Trip provided that all such fundraising is conducted in accordance with all PSB policies including, without limitation, any policy relative to student activity accounts.*

The Subcommittee discussed whether there are options for providing financial assistance beyond group fundraising. It was noted that the Student Financial Assistance Policy does not currently apply to out-of-state trips. The members discussed the following: financial implications of expanding the scope of the policy, particularly in light of the district's current budget constraints and uncertainty; whether the current wording of the policy might require the district to eliminate some trips; whether the Policy Review Subcommittee should get input from the Finance Subcommittee regarding the budget implications of providing district financial support; and requested that staff do further research on how this has been handled at Brookline High School. Mr. Glover will ask Ms. Normen for input on the issue of financial assistance.

The Subcommittee discussed trip insurance requirements, including whether this language should be in the policy or procedures and whether there should be a separate fund or insurance policy to cover emergencies. Mr. Glover will contact Ms. Normen to

see whether it would be beneficial to get an insurance analysis to determine what is needed and available.

The Subcommittee will continue this discussion at the next Policy Review Subcommittee meeting.

### **3) Discussion of School Councils and School Council Policy**

Mr. Lummis reviewed draft School Council Procedures (Attachment B). The intent of the document is to give guidance to School Councils and Principals to ensure compliance with State Law and School Committee Policy.

#### Subcommittee Questions/Comments:

- Clarify the process for developing School Improvement Plan Goals.
- Questioned whether some sections (e.g., introductory paragraphs and the references to Professional Development, Elections, and Budget Review) are consistent with the letter and intent of School Committee Policy and Law. The procedures appear to give the Site Councils more of an advisory/consultative role than a decision-making role.
- Reference training/onboarding of members.
- Should emphasize a school-based approach.
- Should solicit input on the Procedures from School Council members and others, not just Principals.
- Clarify the minimum number of meetings.
- Consider adding provision of feedback on aspects of Curriculum under Responsibilities.
- Schedule elections this spring for the next school year.

Members suggested getting input from the full School Committee and School Curriculum Subcommittee. Ms. Monopoli will update the Curriculum Subcommittee and ask that the issue of Site Councils be added to an upcoming agenda.

### **4) New Business**

Dr. Abramowitz offered to prepare a draft statement relative to ensuring that students have access to education during mandated closures. Members noted that consideration of a statement should be done in concert with the Curriculum Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee postponed discussion of the Policy on Public Comment at School Committee Meetings and a possible Policy relative to Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care.

The next meetings of the Policy Review Subcommittee will take place on April 13, 2020 at 5:00 PM and April 21, 2020 at 5:00 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

**[32.3013.20 Draft Brookline Field Trip Policy]**

The Public Schools of Brookline (the “PSB”) recognizes that first-hand experiences provided by school-sponsored trips (“Field Trips”) are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. Therefore, the PSB encourages Field Trips that are related to the total school program and curriculum, or otherwise provide meaningful experiences for students. Field Trips shall be organized, planned and approved in accordance with this policy.

I. Purpose of Field Trips

All Field Trips shall be designed to supplement the educational program or provide meaningful enrichment opportunities for students.

II. Approval

Field Trips shall be organized and approved in accordance with this policy. Each Field Trip must be approved in advance by the Superintendent and the applicable school leader provided that the Superintendent and/or the applicable school leader may designate one or more persons to approve Field Trips on her/his/their behalf. Any such designation may apply to all or a certain subset of Field Trips as determined by the Superintendent or the applicable school leader.

In addition to the foregoing, all Field Trips involving overnight, out-of-state or international travel must be approved by the School Committee. Neither the Superintendent nor any school leader (nor any respective designee thereof) shall approve a Field Trip unless and until the following information regarding the Field Trip has been provided to the Superintendent, the applicable school leader, or their respective designee(s), as applicable:

- Purpose
- Date(s)
- Itinerary
- Estimated number of students
- Costs per student
- Designation of PSB staff leader(s)
- Anticipated ratio of chaperones to students
- Transportation arrangements
- Meal and lodging arrangements
- Means of financing/funding
- Drafts of contracts associated with the Field Trip
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- Description of process to determine student eligibility
- Emergency crisis plan

All requests for the approval of a Field Trip must be submitted in accordance with the following schedule:

<b>Field Trip Type</b>	<b>Deadline for Request</b>
In-State Trips	30 days prior to Field Trip

Out-of-State Trips	60 days prior to Field Trip
International Trips	May 15 <sup>th</sup> of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the Field Trip will take place <sup>1</sup>

### III. Access

The right of a student to participate in any Field Trip shall not be infringed upon or impaired because of gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, sexual identity or disability. Reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure that Field Trip participants reflect the diversity of the PSB's student population.

Files for all students participating in a Field Trip shall be reviewed to determine if any accommodations, supports or modifications are required in order for a student to participate in and have equal access to such Field Trip.

No student shall be denied participation in a Field Trip because of financial inability to pay the fee or costs associated with the Field Trip. School leaders, students and groups may engage in reasonable fundraising efforts to defray the cost of a Field Trip provided that all such fundraising is conducted in accordance with all PSB policies including, without limitation, any policy relative to student activity accounts.

No student shall be denied participation in a Field Trip as a form of punishment for previous behavior for which he/she/they have been disciplined. A student may only be excluded from a Field Trip if the date or dates of his/her/their suspension or expulsion from school coincides with the scheduled date or dates of the Field Trip, or if, in the reasonable judgment of the Principal/Headmaster in consultation with school-based staff, a student's previous or current behavior poses a substantial risk to the health, safety and welfare of the student, other students and/or staff participating in the Field Trip.

### IV. Non-Participating Students on Curriculum-Based Field Trips

Students who do not participate in a curriculum-based Field Trip that takes place during the regularly scheduled school day shall be provided with alternate instructional activities that have related academic and intellectual value.

### V. Cancellation/Rescheduling

Approval of all Field Trips shall be conditional. Such approval may be revoked or a Field Trip may be rescheduled due to an exigency or other circumstances that warrant cancellation or rescheduling of a Field Trip. The PSB and the Brookline School Committee will not be responsible for any financial obligations incurred, any monies that are non-refundable or any monies that are otherwise lost due to

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<sup>1</sup> Provided that such requirement may be waived by the Superintendent in her/his/their discretion

the cancellation or rescheduling of a Field Trip, or due to a student's exclusion from participation and access to a Field Trip as a result of the student's suspension or expulsion from school, or safety-based exclusion on the date or dates of the Field Trip.

#### VI. Conflicts of Interest

In no event shall PSB staff members or chaperones involved in organizing and/or attending a Field Trip be compensated, directly or indirectly, from any company, sponsor or others for his or her role in organizing or attending the Field Trip. However, the Massachusetts Ethics Commission does allow for the costs of the trip for the staff member/chaperone to be covered, in which case the staff members(s)/chaperone(s) must file a Disclosure of Financial Interest Form with the School Committee and the Town Clerk.

Upon the filing of any such Disclosure of Financial Interest Form, the Field Trip may not occur unless and until the School Committee determines that the benefits of the Field Trip to the students outweigh the private benefit to the staff member, tour company and/or the chaperones.

PSB staff members are prohibited from soliciting non-school sponsored, privately run trips through the school system. PSB staff who privately conduct educational tours or trips must clearly state that these trips are not school-sponsored and that the School Committee and the PSB do not sanction the trip nor assume any responsibility or liability for the trip.

#### VII. Student Conduct

All rules and policies of the Public Schools of Brookline and the applicable school community shall apply on all Field Trips.

#### VIII. Procedures

The Superintendent, or her/his/their designee, shall develop procedures for the review and approval of Field Trips. The procedures must include provisions that ensure, without limitation, that (i) all students have parental/guardian permission for Field Trips; (ii) all Field Trips are properly supervised by PSB staff or qualified chaperones that have undergone adequate background checks, (iii) all safety precautions are observed, (iv) students participating in Field Trips will have access to adequate transportation, lodging and meals, and (v) all Field Trips allow for equal access and reasonable accommodations by all interested students. All such procedures shall comply with this policy, and all applicable state and federal laws.

**Public Schools of Brookline  
School Council Procedures  
Draft  
March 30, 2020**

*“A school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, community members, and, at the secondary level, students, required to be established by each school pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C.”<sup>1</sup>*

*PSB School Committee Policy states that School Councils, by law, shall meet regularly with the principal of the school, and “**shall assist and make recommendations to the principal**” on the identification of the educational needs of students attending the school, in the review of the annual school budget, and in the formation of a school improvement plan.<sup>2</sup>*

**Membership (from PSB Policy unless otherwise noted)**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Council Role</b>
School Principal	Co-chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The other council co-chair is selected by the council as a whole during the first meeting</li> </ul>
Four Members of the School Staff	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elected by school staff</li> <li>- Can be any employee who works at the school</li> </ul>
Four parents	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elected by parents of school</li> <li>- Elections conducted by PTO Executive Board in consultation with the school Principal</li> </ul>
Two community members (non-parent)	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selected by Principal</li> <li>- Someone who is not a parent or teacher of students at the school<sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawn from such groups or entities as business, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, or other interested parties<sup>1</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
K-8 only: Up to two students	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principal <b>may</b> invite up to two members of the 7th or 8th grade classes to participate as fully as possible in individual meetings</li> </ul>
BHS only: One student	Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elected by Student Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Guidance on School Council Membership from PSB School Committee policy<sup>2</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Every attempt should be made to have School Councils broadly representative of racial and ethnic groups”</li> </ul>	

- “It is recommended that any elected official of the Town and employees of the Brookline Public Schools not serve as members of the Brookline School Councils, except for the principals and teachers in their roles mentioned in the previous section.”

**School Council Responsibilities \***

1. Adopting education goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statement student performance standards
2. Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
3. Reviewing annual school building budget
4. Formulating a school improvement plan
5. Reviewing the student handbook to consider changes in the disciplinary code consistent with PSB policies
6. Making recommendations for the development, implementation, and assessment of the curriculum accommodation plan

\* Responsibilities as stated in state law and PSB School Committee policy

**Further Details on School Council Responsibilities:**

	Definition(s)
Review of school budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Council and Principal “read through documents that describe the school budget in order to understand the implications for items in the School Improvement Plan.”<sup>1</sup></li> <li>● The council should review the full school budget as provided by the district to the public and principal.</li> <li>● The council’s review should focus on whether the budget reflects the goals of the school improvement plan.</li> <li>● The School Council “shall have no authority over matters which are subject to collective bargaining (Ch. 150E of Massachusetts General Law).”<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Formulating a School Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School’s educational goals are determined by the Principal in consultation with the School Council.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>● Goals must be consistent with the MA student performance standards and with educational policies of the Public Schools of Brookline.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “The School Councils, by law, are to assist and make recommendations to the principal. Votes are not appropriate. The formation of consensus on particular items would be helpful to the principal.”<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Elections of Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Elections happen in spring for the following school year.</li> <li>● Two year terms for all members.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms should be staggered to ensure a blend of new and experienced members.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• In spring 2020, half of the members should be elected for one-year terms, and half should be elected for two year terms so terms will be staggered going forward.</li> </ul>
Role of Co-Chair (non-principal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Agenda with Principal</li> <li>• Co-facilitate meetings with Principal</li> <li>• Ensure Council abides by Open Meeting Laws</li> </ul>

### **School Improvement Plans**

Submitted annually to the School Committee for review (timing determined by School Committee schedule)

#### Elements of the annual School Improvement Plan <sup>1</sup>

1. Assessment of:
  - a. Impact of class size on student performance
  - b. Student to teacher ratios
  - c. Ratios of student to other supportive adult resources
2. Scheduled plan for reducing class size, if necessary
3. Professional development for the school's staff and the allocation of any professional development funds in the school budget
4. Enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school
5. School safety and discipline
6. Establishment of a school environment characterized by tolerance and respect for all groups
7. Extra-curricular activities
8. Means for meeting the diverse learning needs of as many children as possible
9. Any further subjects the Principal in consultation with school council are considered appropriate

### **Practices and Procedures for School Councils**

- Decide up front the number and schedule of meetings
  - a. First meeting must take place no later than 40 days after the opening day of school
  - b. All meetings must be conducted in accordance with requirements of [Open Meeting Law](#):
  - c. School Councils should meet no fewer than four times per year
- Create simple/written agendas for each meeting
- Make decisions by consensus or majority rule.
  - a. Votes are not appropriate
  - b. Consensus on particular items that might be helpful to the principal

### **Open Meeting Law**

- Hold all meetings in public and allow anyone in attendance to audio or video-tape as long as it is not disruptive to the meeting
- Notice of each meeting should be posted with the Town Clerk in a public place at least 48 hours prior to the meeting using the Town website Calendar function
- Meeting minutes must be completed and include date, time, place, members present and absent, and actions taken. Per Open Meeting Law requirements, minutes must be approved in a timely fashion and be made available to the public for inspection and copying within ten days of a request.
- Meeting can only begin when a majority of council members are in attendance (quorum).

### **Communications with School Community**

- Agendas should be shared with the entire school community
- Minutes from meetings and a meeting summary should be shared with the entire school community
- Elections should be widely advertised and communicated

### **Sources:**

- (1) [MA Department of Education Guidelines](#)
- (2) [PSB School Committee policy](#)

DRAFT