

School Committee Policy Review Subcommittee
Tuesday, April 21, 2020
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Remote via Webex Event

Policy Review Subcommittee members present: Michael Glover (Chair), Sharon Abramowitz, Jennifer Monopoli, and David Pearlman.
School Staff present: Ben Lummis, Nicole Gittens, Maria Letasz, and Robin Coyne.

1) Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Mr. Glover and seconded by Mr. Pearlman, the Policy Review Subcommittee voted unanimously (by roll call) to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2020 Policy Review Subcommittee meeting.

2) Discussion of School Council Policy and Procedures

The Subcommittee discussed School Council Policy and Procedures. Mr. Lummis provided background on the development of the draft procedures. He will solicit feedback from current School Council members. School Councils can still function and hold elections while the procedures are under review.

It was noted that the School Curriculum Subcommittee will be discussing School Councils and the development of School Improvement Plans when the Subcommittee meets on May 11, 2020.

3) Discussion of Draft Field Trip Policy

Mr. Glover explained his proposed edits to the draft Field Trip Policy (Attachment A). No objections were raised. The consensus of the Subcommittee was that the revised draft should be posted for public comment tomorrow, and that the revised draft should be presented to the School Committee for a 2nd Reading/Possible Vote on April 30, 2020.

4) Discussion of Draft Policy on Homeless Students

The Subcommittee reviewed the revised draft Policy on Homeless Students Enrollment Rights and Services (Attachment B). Mr. Pearlman explained that he incorporated feedback from Subcommittee members and Director of Guidance and Clinical Services Maria Letasz. Dr. Letasz explained current procedures and guidelines, noting that staff consider individual circumstances, and that homeless students are allowed to remain in the Public Schools of Brookline through the end of the school year even if their circumstances change. Members suggested some edits for clarity, including defining school of origin. The Subcommittee will continue discussion at the next Subcommittee meeting on April 27, 2020.

5) Discussion of Draft Policy on Students in Foster Care

The Subcommittee reviewed the revised draft Policy on Students in Foster Care (Attachment C). Mr. Pearlman explained that he incorporated feedback from Subcommittee members and Director of Guidance and Clinical Services Maria Letasz. Dr. Letasz explained current procedures and guidelines. She noted that the following sentence appears to transfer responsibility from the Department of Children and Families

(DCF) to the district: *Upon request, the PSB shall also provide copies of the Best Interest Determination to the student's attorney, the education GAL surrogate, and the CASA within three calendar days.* Subcommittee members thought it important to retain this language, noting that it is only upon request. Members agreed to change "three calendar days" to "three business days." Members suggested some edits for clarity. The Subcommittee will continue discussion at the next Subcommittee meeting on April 27, 2020.

6) Discussion of Policy on Public Comment at School Committee Meetings

The Subcommittee had an initial discussion of the Policy on Public Comment at School Committee Meetings. Dr. Abramowitz offered to review the PSB Policy Manual for additional references to Public Comment. The Subcommittee will review Dr. Abramowitz's findings and suggestions, along with Mr. Glover's proposed edits, at the next Subcommittee meeting on April 27, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Draft Public Schools of Brookline Student Field Trip Policy
4.30.20 School Committee 2nd Reading/Possible Vote

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
- Description of process to determine student eligibility
- Emergency crisis plan
- Travel Insurance (if and to the extent required by the Superintendent or her/his designee).

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

<u>Field Trip Type</u>	<u>Deadline for Request</u>
In-State Trips	30 days prior to Field Trip
Out-of-State Trips	60 days prior to Field Trip
International Trips	May 15 th of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the Field Trip will take place ¹

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.

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.

The Field Trip proponent(s) shall ensure that no student is denied participation in a Field Trip because of financial inability to pay the fee or costs associated with the Field Trip. A student's ability to pay shall be determined pursuant to the Public Schools of Brookline's Student Financial Assistance Policy. 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

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

obligations incurred, any monies that are non-refundable or any monies that are otherwise lost due to 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.

HOMELESS STUDENTS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES

I. Preamble.

A. As required by law, the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) will work with homeless children as well as their families or legal guardian(s) to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not attending school.

B. This policy is intended to cover two types of homeless students:

(i) enrolled PSB students who become homeless and are temporarily housed outside of Brookline;

(ii) homeless students temporarily housed within Brookline.

II. Definitions.

A. Homeless students are defined as students lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;

2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;

4. Being abandoned in hospitals;

5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for people;

6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or other similar settings;

7. Living in temporary housing provided by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance or other government agencies or charity organizations;

8. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in conditions described in the previous examples.

III. Services.

A. Homeless students attending the PSB will be provided district services for which other PSB students are generally eligible, including pre-school programs, Title I, special education, and bilingual education. Homeless students attending the PSB will be eligible for vocational and technical education, gifted and talented programs, wraparound service programs, school nutrition programs, summer programs, after school programs, athletics programs, music, visual arts and performing arts programs, and other extracurricular activities.

B. The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families. The PSB homeless education liaison shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students. The liaison shall ensure district staff receive professional development and other support on issues involving homeless students.

IV. Enrollment.

A. All homeless students temporarily housed in Brookline shall be entitled to attend the PSB. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is presumed to be in the best interest of homeless students to remain in their schools of origin, i.e., the school that the student was attending at the time homelessness commenced, or the last school the student attended prior to becoming homeless, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian. When determining a student's best interest, the district must consider student-centered factors, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children and youths.

B. Enrolled PSB students who subsequently become homeless and are temporarily housed outside of Brookline may continue to remain enrolled within the PSB for as long as they remain homeless and for the duration of any school year in which they cease being homeless, regardless of residency.

C. Homeless students temporarily housed in Brookline but whose school of origin is outside of the PSB may continue to attend their school of origin for as long as they remain temporarily housed in Brookline, or until the end of their school of origin's current academic reporting period (e.g. quarter, trimester, semester, etc.) except that:

(i) homeless students in the final grade level at a school in the PSB may remain within the PSB until the end of the school year during which they move out of Brookline;

(ii) enrolled PSB students who subsequently become homeless inside or outside of Brookline may continue within the PSB for the duration of any school year.

D. For homeless students who completed or complete the final grade level served by the school of origin, and remain homeless in Brookline or were enrolled in the PSB at the time they became homeless, the term "school of origin" shall also include the receiving school in the same school district educating students at the next grade level.

E. Homeless students are entitled to transportation comparable to that provided for all other students attending school in the district. The PSB shall help coordinate transportation for eligible students who are sheltered or temporarily residing within Brookline to the students' school of origin, in accordance with state and federal law. For homeless students residing outside of Brookline for whom the school of origin is within Brookline, the PSB shall similarly

coordinate with the district in which the student is sheltered or temporarily residing to provide the transportation services necessary, in accordance with state and federal law.

V. Students Enrolling in District Where Sheltered or Temporarily Residing.

A. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may elect to enroll homeless students in the school district in which the student is sheltered or temporarily residing, rather than having the student remain in the school of origin.

B. If homeless students are unable to provide written proof of their shelter or temporary residence, the homeless liaison will work with the family seeking enrollment to determine homelessness.

VI. Records.

A. Information about the homeless student's living arrangements shall be considered a student education record, and not directory information. Records containing information about the homeless student's living arrangement may not be disclosed without the consent of the parent or legal guardian, absent a state or federal student-privacy related exemption.

B. If the student cannot provide immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be permitted to enroll under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible.

VII. Contact Information.

A. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with PSB policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program where necessary.

B. After enrollment, the PSB will immediately request available records from any school(s) attended by the homeless student within the last two calendar years.

VIII. Dispute Resolution.

A. If the PSB disagrees with a parent or legal guardian's determination of a homeless student's best interests for school district placement, the PSB will explain to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), in writing and in a language the parent can understand, the rationale for its determination and provide the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) with written notice of their rights to appeal the PSB's determination to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

B. During the pendency of an appeal to DESE, the student may remain enrolled at whichever school the student attended during the filing of the appeal. Pending appeal, the student may receive transportation to that school, consistent with state and federal law.

C. If an out of district school of origin refuses to keep a student during the pendency of a parent or legal guardian's appeal, the PSB shall enroll that student in the PSB, provided that the student qualifies as homeless and temporarily resides in Brookline.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

I. Preamble.

A. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care. Educational stability has a lasting impact on students' academic achievement and wellbeing, and the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) are committed to supporting all efforts to ensure that students in foster care have access to high-quality, stable educational experiences from pre-school through high school graduation.

B. This policy is intended to cover two types of foster care students:

- (i) enrolled PSB students who subsequently enter into foster care.
- (ii) foster care students temporarily residing in Brookline.

II. School Placement.

A. Whenever a student changes placement (i.e. enters foster care), a Best Interest Determination (BID) must occur. Irrespective of the location of a foster care placement, students in foster care will continue to attend their school of origin, unless after a collaborative Best Interest Determination (as hereinafter defined), it is stated, in writing, to be in the student's best interest to enroll in and attend school in the district in which the student resides in foster care. Enrollment of students in the district where they reside in foster care will take place upon written completion of the Best Interest Determination.

B. The superintendent shall designate a point of contact (POC) for students in foster care. The responsibilities of the POC include participating in the process for making best interest determinations, ensuring school enrollment and attendance of students in foster care, providing timely transfer of records, developing and implementing procedures for providing and coordinating cost-effective transportation, as needed; and facilitating professional development for district staff to promote educational stability for students in foster care. The PSB and the POC will collaborate with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to ensure that students are enrolled in and regularly attending school, enjoy full and equal opportunities to succeed in school and meet the same state academic standards as other students, as well as receive other services for which they are eligible.

III. Best Interest Determination

A. Decisions about whether a student in foster care should continue to attend the school of origin (a "Best Interest Determination") should be made promptly and collaboratively by DCF, the school and district of origin, the district in which the student resides in foster care, the education guardian ad litem (GAL) surrogate if one has been appointed, the court appointed special advocate (CASA) if one has been appointed, and as situationally appropriate, the student, the student's family, and the foster family. The PSB shall make an effort to also include appropriate individuals with specific knowledge of the student's needs, such as doctors, therapists, mentors, tutors, extracurricular program instructors, and other service providers.

B. Best Interest Determinations should focus on the needs of each individual student. Factors to be considered should include: (1) the student's age and grade level, (2) the student's preference (when age appropriate), (3) the time in the academic year, (4) academic performance, (5) current educational goals and services, (6) the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), if applicable, (7) individual skills, needs, and social connections, (8) ability to maintain family relationships and engagement, (9) clinical and behavioral considerations, (10) safety issues, (11) distance to school, (12) length of the school day, (13) number of school changes and foster placements to date, (14) anticipated length of time in placement, and (15) DCF's goal for the child (e.g. reunification, third party custody, guardianship, adoption, etc.). Additionally, the parties involved in the decision may wish to determine a time to revisit the question of whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin or enroll locally.

C. Every effort should be made to reach agreement regarding the appropriate school placement of a student in foster care. However, if there is disagreement regarding school placement for a student in foster care, then DCF, as legal custodian, will finalize the Best Interest Determination if the relevant parties cannot agree on the best school for the student to attend.

D. All Best Interest Determinations shall be made in writing. The PSB shall ensure that copies of the Best Interest Determination will be provided to the school of origin or district in which the student resides (as applicable), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the student (if 18 or older) within one day of completion. Upon request, the PSB shall also provide copies of the Best Interest Determination to the student's attorney, the education GAL surrogate, and the CASA within three calendar days.

(i) Attorneys representing students must provide a certified copy of the applicable court docket confirming their appointment to represent the child, an active Massachusetts Attorney Bar card, and an active state or national photo identification card prior to receipt of any communications regarding the student.

(ii) Education GAL surrogates and CASAs must provide a certified copy of their court appointment, active professional licensure, and active state or national photo identification card prior to receipt of any communications regarding the student.

E. The PSB can seek review of DCF's decision by utilizing a Foster Care School Selection Dispute Resolution Process established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and DCF. Decisions made through this process are not subject to review. To the extent feasible and appropriate in accordance with state and federal law, the PSB will ensure that a child remains at the school of last attendance while the disputes are being resolved to minimize disruptions and reduce the number of moves between schools.

IV. Transportation

A. The PSB shall collaborate with DCF and the relevant outside district on how transportation will be arranged and provided to ensure that students in foster care who are eligible for transportation to remain in their school of origin will receive such transportation while they are in foster care, in accordance with state and federal law. Transportation options may include using

Title I funds, establishing regional collaborations among districts, coordinating with existing routes for transportation, and seeking help from foster parent(s), etc.

V. Enrollment

A. If it is in the best interests of a student in foster care to attend school locally (where placed in foster care), the district must enroll the student immediately. During enrollment of students in foster care, DCF representatives will present the district with current Notice to the Local Educational Agency and the Mittimus indicating that the student is in foster care, along with a state-agency identification badge.

B. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be permitted to enroll under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary. After enrollment, the district will immediately request available records from the student's previous school.

C. PSB students in foster care will be provided district services for which other PSB students are generally eligible, including pre-school programs, Title I, special education, and bilingual education. Foster care students will be eligible for vocational and technical education, gifted and talented programs, wraparound service programs, school nutrition programs, summer programs, after school programs, athletics programs, music, visual arts and performing arts programs, and other extracurricular activities.

VI. Attendance

A. Foster care students may continue to coordinate with the PSB for attendance at their out of district school of origin for as long as they remain living at a foster care placement in Brookline, or until the end of their school's current academic reporting period (e.g. quarter, trimester, semester).

B. Foster care students subsequently enrolled in the PSB who exit foster care or relocate to foster care placements outside of Brookline may remain within the PSB until the end of their school's current academic reporting period, except that foster care students in the final grade level at a school in the PSB may remain within the PSB for the duration of that school year.

C. Enrolled PSB students who subsequently enter into foster care may continue within the PSB for as long as they remain in foster care, pending Best Interest Determination(s), and for the duration of any school year in which they exit foster care, regardless of residency.

D. For foster care students who completed or complete the final grade level served by the school of origin, and remain at a foster care placement in Brookline or were enrolled in the PSB at the time they entered foster care, the term "school of origin" shall also include the receiving school in the same school district educating students at the next grade level.

