

School Committee Policy Review Subcommittee  
Monday, September 13, 2021  
5:00 PM - 6:20 PM  
Remote via Zoom

Policy Review Subcommittee members present: David Pearlman (Chair), Valerie Frias, Andreas Liu, and Jennifer Monopoli.

Other School Committee members present: Suzanne Federspiel, Susan Wolf Ditkoff, and Steven Ehrenberg.

School Staff present: Casey Ngo-Miller, Tricia Laham, Meaghan Geaney, and Robin Coyne.

Mr. Pearlman called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

**1) Approval of Minutes**

On a motion of Ms. Monopoli and seconded by Dr. Liu, the Policy Review Subcommittee voted unanimously (by roll call) to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2021 Policy Review Subcommittee meeting.

**2) Update on Student Vaccine Mandates**

Ms. Laham noted that the district has scheduled COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics. Mr. Pearlman reported that he has asked the legislative delegation for information on the status of a state requirement that students be vaccinated. Brookline has never before required a vaccine that is not required by the State. The Lexington School District is requiring COVID-19 vaccination in order to participate in certain voluntary activities with a potentially higher risk for transmission, e.g., some sports and musical groups. At the request of the Subcommittee, Dr. Liu will ask Remote Task Force Advisory Panel 4 for input on whether the district should consider a similar requirement.

**3) Update on Attendance Policies for Quarantining Students and School Committee Statement**

Mr. Pearlman noted that on September 8, 2021, the Policy Review Subcommittee discussed a possible Brookline School Committee Statement on Learning for Absent Students in COVID-19 Protocols. At that meeting staff expressed concerns about some of the wording of the proposed statement (the statement may set an expectation that students will be able to use Zoom for synchronous learning, teachers will have a full class of in-person students, need to hear from educators and school leaders, may need to consider individual circumstances to determine the best approach, confident teachers with support of administration will be able to address this issue). At that meeting members noted that this is an aspirational statement and not a policy. To the extent possible, there should be consistent and equitable practices across the district. It would be helpful to have guidelines for grade bands. Students shouldn't be penalized (both educationally and by being marked absent) if they are staying home for public health reasons. It was noted that the new "Test and Stay" protocols should substantially reduce the number of quarantined students. Ms. Ryan Miller agreed to ask the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for clarification of attendance policies (i.e., what qualifies as a full day of school for attendance purposes). Members suggested use of OWL video

conferencing cameras. The Subcommittee voted to recommend a draft Statement (Attachment A) to the full School Committee for deliberation.

On September 9, 2021, the full School Committee discussed the Subcommittee's proposed statement. School Committee members and staff reiterated the concerns/issues raised during the September 8, 2021 Policy Review Subcommittee meeting (see above). At that meeting Ms. Cooley reported that DESE appears to be requiring that students at home participate in simultaneous remote instruction in order to be marked present. Members agreed to continue the discussion at the next School Committee meeting on September 23, 2021.

Mr. Pearlman asked Policy Review Subcommittee members and staff for input on a possible statement that would reflect the School Committee's goals to not punish students who are quarantining by marking them absent and to ensure that students who are quarantining are as connected to the classroom as is possible.

Staff asked whether the Subcommittee would want to explore a possible amendment to the Attendance Policy. Staff members remain concerned that the district not overpromise and set unrealistic expectations. Technology is not an impediment. Staff will follow up with DESE to clarify the requirements for a student to be marked present when doing work from home.

Members emphasized the importance of clarifying the following: 1) What does the district plan to offer to meet the pedagogical needs of students who are quarantining, and to ensure that there is equity and consistency across grade bands? 2) What needs to happen to enable the district to ensure that students' needs are met (e.g., clarification of DESE guidelines; negotiations/input from BEU, principals, teachers, families; technology, logistical, and other needs)?

Mr. Pearlman will ask the Office of Teaching and Learning to respond to and provide further detail on the questions above. Members suggested that this subject be revisited no later than the September 23, 2021 School Committee meeting.

#### **4) Discussion of School Admissions Policy**

Office of Registration and Enrollment Coordinator Meaghan Geaney was present to discuss proposed changes to the School Admissions Policy. The Office is currently staffed by the Coordinator, a Registration and Enrollment Specialist, and a part-time District Attendance Officer. Ms. Geaney noted several issues.

1. Documentation for Registration - the list as provided in the Policy does not match, in practice, the documents the district asks of families. The School Department has developed a list to obtain documents that reflect residency and occupancy as separate categories. The Office has latitude to work with families with untraditional circumstances, but would like to make sure that the School Committee and the School Department are asking families an agreed upon set of appropriate documentation.

2. Landlord Affidavit - The form specifies a Massachusetts notary; this is problematic for non-resident landlords. The office does not abide by this, as it would make it quite difficult for many tenants and landlords to actually comply. The Office also requires this of all renters to accompany a lease contract. So many leases are now docusigned that this acts as a secondary surety of the validity of a lease. Finally, the language is such that some landlords will refuse to sign because the landlord “does not do bed checks,” which causes difficulties for some tenants.

3. Residency Verification - the policy, as written, is not possible to execute based on staffing. The Office wants to align the intent with a practice that is executable.

In addition, the September 1 school start date has been extremely challenging on the registration side. The Office asks for a lease as part of documentation of residency, but most leases begin September 1. It has been difficult to get families who begin their leases on this day in for the first day of school.

In response to a question, Ms. Geaney explained that students who were withdrawn for home schooling must reenroll in the Public Schools of Brookline. The district tries to fulfill school requests, but this is not always possible because of school capacity and transportation issues.

Mr. Pearlman will work with staff to draft proposed revisions to the Public Schools of Brookline Admissions Policy for Subcommittee consideration at the next meeting.

#### **5) New Business**

Members requested an update on review of the district’s plan to replace services previously provided by School Resource Officers. Mr. Pearlman reported that Dr. Guillory intends to present an update during the September 23, 2021 School Committee meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

### **SECTION J STUDENTS**

#### **1. Admissions**

**a. School Admissions** (Voted 6/19/78, #78-309, 10, 11; 6/4/79, #79-191; 10/6/81, #81-462; 6/21/83, #83-260; 6/6/85 #85-226; 4/27/89, #89-197; 6/16/05, #05-81; 6/6/13, #13-46, 1/30/14, #14-8; 6/5/14, #14-46; 12/3/15, #15-81)

Pursuant to MGL Chapter 76, sec. 5, the School Committee recognizes the right of all otherwise eligible persons actually residing in the Town of Brookline to be able to attend the Public Schools of Brookline (“PSB”), subject to the following policy and any relevant federal, state or local laws.

#### I. Residency

In order to attend the PSB, a student must actually reside in the Town of Brookline, unless one of the exceptions (set forth in Part V, below) applies.

“Residence” is the primary place where a person dwells permanently, not temporarily, and with the intent to remain, and is the place that is the center of his or her domestic, social, and civic life. Minors are generally presumed to reside with their parents or guardians. Temporary residence in the Town of Brookline, solely for the purpose of attending the PSB, shall not be considered residency. Unless as otherwise stated in Section V, below, a student shall not be allowed to attend the PSB unless the student is actually residing in the Town of Brookline. It is presumed that if a student is residing here for three months or less, the student does not meet resident eligibility requirements.

In determining and reconfirming residency, the PSB reserves its right to request a variety of documentation and to investigate where a student or applicant for enrollment actually resides on an ongoing basis. Also, the PSB may act upon anonymous tips it receives to conduct a residency verification investigation.

Unless one or more of the exceptions set forth in Section V applies, a determination that a student does not actually reside in the Town of Brookline renders the student ineligible to enroll in the Public Schools of Brookline or, if the student is already enrolled in the Public Schools of Brookline, shall result in the immediate termination of such enrollment. A parent, legal guardian, or student who has reached the age of majority (18), who is aggrieved by an adverse determination of residency has the right to an appeal hearing with the Superintendent of Schools or designee, whose decision shall be final.

#### II. Verification of Residency

**a. Initial Enrollment.** Upon initial enrollment in the PSB, the enrolling student’s parent or legal guardian must provide the district with a signed Affidavit of Residency, along with satisfactory proof of residency in the Town of Brookline. Upon initial enrollment, proof of residency shall include one or more records from each of the categories of records listed below.

**b. Subsequent Enrollment (annual renewal).** No later than the first day of school of each school

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

year following initial enrollment, a student's parent or legal guardian must provide a signed Affidavit of Residency along with proof of residency in the Town of Brookline. For subsequent enrollment, proof of residency shall include one or more records from Columns A and B. A parent, guardian, or eligible student who is unable to produce the required records should contact the Office of Student Affairs, who may permit other records to be submitted as satisfactory proof of residency.

### Category A

- Deed and/or record of mortgage payment made within the past 45 days; *or*
- Copy of current lease and record of rental payment made within the past 45 days; *or*
- Notarized PSB Landlord Affidavit and proof of rental payment made within past 45 days.

### Category B

- Utility bill dated within the past 45 days, such as oil, gas, electric, cable bill, renter's insurance bill, car insurance bill, *or* home telephone bill.

### Category C

- Valid Massachusetts Driver's License
- Current Motor Vehicle Registration
- Valid government-issued photo identification
- IRS Form W-2
- Excise Tax Bill
- Property Tax Bill
- Payroll Stub
- Voter Registration

The Headmaster and Principals, or their designees, shall verify the home address and home telephone number of each student at least once during each school year. Any irregularities shall be reported promptly to the Office of Student Affairs. Parents are required to notify the school of any changes to their residential address or the address of the student within five calendar days of the change.

### III. Enforcement

Should a question arise concerning any student's residency in the Town of Brookline while attending the PSB, the student's residency will be subject to further inquiry and/or investigation. Such questions concerning residency may arise on the basis of incomplete, suspicious, or contradictory proofs of address, anonymous tips, correspondence that is returned to the Public Schools of Brookline because of an invalid or unknown address, or other grounds.

The Office of Student Affairs may request additional documentation, may use the assistance of the Public Schools of Brookline Attendance Officer, and/or may obtain the services of police or investigative agency personnel to assist with or conduct investigations into student residency. The Attendance Officer and/or residency investigator(s) will report his or her findings to the Office of Student Affairs, who shall make an initial determination of residency.

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

Upon an initial determination by the Office of Student Affairs that a student is not actually residing in the Town of Brookline, the student's enrollment in the Public Schools of Brookline shall be terminated. The student's parent or legal guardian may appeal the determination as outlined in Section I, above. If the student has reached the age of majority (18) he or she may appeal the decision. The student may remain in school pending such appeal.

### IV. Penalties

In addition to termination of enrollment and the imposition of other penalties permitted by law, the Public Schools of Brookline reserves the right to recover restitution based upon the costs of educational services provided during the period of non-residency.

### V. Exceptions

#### 1. The Residency Requirements Shall Not Apply to the Following:

- a. Students enrolled in the Brookline METCO Program;
- b. Students enrolled in the High School under special programs approved by the School Committee, such as educational exchange programs;
- c. Tuition paying students, as permitted by law, unless tuition is waived under Section V(2) below;
- d. Children of non-resident employees of the Town of Brookline, who meet the conditions established from time to time by the School Committee in the policy pertaining to such students;
- e. Students who are entitled to attend the Public Schools of Brookline under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- f. Students already enrolled in the Public Schools of Brookline who move out on or after April 1<sup>st</sup> of a given school year, or in the case of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and Brookline High School seniors who move out on or after Oct 1<sup>st</sup> of a given school year, may complete that year on a tuition basis, unless tuition is waived.

#### 2. Extraordinary Circumstances: Residency Requirement Waivers and Tuition Waivers

At the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee, residency requirements and/or tuition may be waived as follows:

- a. Students in their senior class at Brookline High School who move from Brookline on or after October 1 of their senior year, and who resided in Brookline during the entire previous school year.
- b. Students who move to or from Brookline temporarily because of the severe or chronic illness of the student or immediate family member; the death of an immediate family

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

member; disaster to the residence; or other circumstances having a significant impact upon the student.

### 3. Dwelling Units that are Intersected by the Town Line: (Voted 1/30/14, #14-8)

For the purposes of determining eligibility to attend the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) on the basis of residency, a PSB-eligible residence shall be any dwelling unit, as distinguished from a plot of land or a multi-unit building, on which a minimum of 25% of the dwelling unit is assessed by the Town of Brookline, based on gross building area provided that some/any portion of that 25% is finished living area, as defined by the Brookline Town Assessor.

If a dwelling unit is intersected to whatever degree by the Town Boundary line and assessed on less than 25% of the dwelling unit, based on gross building area and finished living area as described above, that dwelling does not constitute a residence in the PSB district, and students who reside in that dwelling unit shall not be eligible for enrollment in the Public Schools of Brookline.

Determination of gross building area and finished living area shall be that provided by the Brookline Town Assessor. In the case of properties under construction and/or not yet assessed, the PSB Administration may rely on estimates from other relevant Town departments.

*a. Exceptions.* Students and/or dwelling units shall be grandfathered as PSB-eligible if eligible under either of the following exceptions.

*i. Dwelling Units in Intersected Multi-family Buildings Prior to the Adoption of this Policy:*

In the case of an occupied dwelling unit located in a multi-family building intersected by the Town Boundary Line and previously allowed under this policy to be PSB-eligible, children of families residing in that dwelling unit as of the date of adoption of this policy may enroll and/or remain in the PSB until such time as they no longer reside in that dwelling unit.

*ii. Intersected Single Family Dwelling Units Purchased as PSB-eligible Prior to the Adoption of this Policy*

In the case of single family dwelling units intersected to whatever degree by the Town Boundary Line and purchased as PSB-eligible prior to the adoption of this policy, any children of families who reside now or in the future in those dwelling units will be eligible for the Public Schools of Brookline on the basis of residency, with the following caveat.

Should a dwelling unit that would otherwise be exempt under this Section (a) (ii) be altered to increase the number of dwelling units contained in or attached to the physical space containing a dwelling unit (such as through the conversion of a single family dwelling into an attached two-family, or into multiple condominium dwelling units), the exemption under this section shall no longer apply to the dwelling unit.

In addition, any additional dwelling unit(s) added onto an exempt dwelling unit or added onto the property at the same address (for example, such as through the addition of town houses onto a single family home, or the conversion of a carriage house into a

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

dwelling unit) shall not be exempt under this Section(a)(ii).

### *b. Proof of Residency for Intersected Multi-Family Dwellings*

Parents/guardians residing in a multi-family building intersected to whatever degree by the Town line and seeking to enroll a child in the Public Schools of Brookline shall be required to provide proof of residency, in accordance with Section J1a.II above, that identifies the particular dwelling unit in which they reside.

### *c. Right of Appeal*

If a determination of PSB eligibility under this policy is contested, appeal for review may be made to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision regarding enrollment of the student(s) in question shall be final. Enrollment of an individual student under this appeal provision shall be specific to the student and shall not be construed as establishing PSB residency eligibility for the dwelling in question.

### *d. Notice of Policy Concerning Intersected Properties*

The PSB shall maintain and make publicly available a current list of intersected properties that are considered eligible for PSB enrollment.

## VI. Notification

The PSB's residency requirements, verification procedures, and consequences of falsifying or misrepresenting residency will be published in the Brookline School Committee Policy Manual, posted on the Public Schools of Brookline website, and published in each school handbook.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

**THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE  
AFFIDAVIT OF RESIDENCY UPON ENROLLMENT**

I/we, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify as follows:

(Print Student's Full Name)

1. I/we wish to enroll the above named student in the Public Schools of Brookline. I/we understand that pursuant to Massachusetts' law and the Brookline School Committee policy, only students who actually reside in the Town of Brookline may attend the Public Schools of Brookline, unless a policy exception applies. I/we hereby acknowledge that no such policy exception applies to the above student.

2. I/we hereby certify that effective \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, the above student is/will be residing with me/us at the following address in Brookline, Massachusetts:

\_\_\_\_\_  
No. Street Apt. No. Brookline, MA Zip Code Telephone

3. I/we further acknowledge that I/we are required to notify the Principal/Headmaster of the above student's school in writing of any change in said student's address within five (5) calendar days of such change of address.

4. I/we understand that this affidavit will be relied upon by the Public Schools of Brookline for the purpose of determining the above student's eligibility to attend the Public Schools of Brookline on the basis of residency. If said student is enrolled in the Public Schools of Brookline based upon the information contained in this affidavit and it is subsequently determined that the student does not actually reside in Brookline, I/we understand that the student's enrollment in the Public Schools of Brookline will be promptly terminated and I/we will be jointly and severally liable to the Public Schools of Brookline for the student's tuition for the full academic year.

5. I/we further certify that I am/we are the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the above student.

Signed under the pain and penalties of perjury on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Father

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Mother

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Legal Guardian

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

County, ss

Date

Then personally appeared the above named  
and acknowledged the foregoing statements made by him/her to be true,

Before me,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed/Typed Name)

My Commission Expires: