



THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

5:30 pm

Gloucester High School Library

32 Leslie O. Johnson Road, Gloucester, MA 01930

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER/Statement of Mission

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

- *1. Amended Executive Session Minutes of August 29, 2012 (**Confidential**)
 - *2. School Committee Governance Workshop of December 3, 2012
 - *3. Program Sub-Committee of December 6, 2012
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VI. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Update on School Security

VII. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS (Items listed under X. ACTION may be brought forward with reports)

A. Program Sub-Committee of December 6, 2012 — Chairperson Gilman

Agenda: Anti-Bullying Policy Report; Review of Walker Institute of Behavior Management; Math Content Institute (BSRI) and Math Goals; Rationale for Digital Environment; and Application for Community Grant – Linking Community/Organizational Efforts (GEF) with the School District.

VIII. ACTION

DISCLAIMER: Listed below are all known items that may require action but action may not be taken on all items listed; i.e., action items that are known including all votes taken by all sub-committees previous to the Friday before a Wednesday School Committee meeting and items that may flow from the Superintendent's Report.

A. **Free Cash**

B. **Approval of Amended Fuller School MOU**

IX. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS

A. **Status of the Charter School**

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. **Level III GTA Grievance**

B. **Negotiations**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners.

School Committee Governance Workshop Minutes

Monday, December 3, 2012

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

6:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Val Gilman, Vice Chairperson
Kathy Clancy, Secretary
Melissa Teixeira
Tony Gross

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent

Also Present

Dorothy Presser, President of MASC

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG** – Waived
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None
- IV. DISCUSSION**
- A. School Committee Overarching Goals** – Dorothy Presser distributed feedback from the leadership team on the draft overarching goals, which also includes the comments from the School Committee's Post-it Notes and Dr. Safier's notes. Out of the overarching goals will come SMART goals, some or all of which will be part of the superintendent's SMART goals in the superintendent evaluation tool. Ms. Presser stated that the district goals and the superintendent goals should mesh. She indicated that the committee may want to get more feedback about the overarching goals from different groups, such as site-based councils.
- Mrs. Gilman suggested posting the draft goals on the website to give the public an opportunity to provide input, as well as Dr. Safier doing a "My View" or an all-call to let parents know about them. She also requested that Dr. Safier edit the overarching goals based on the leadership team's comments.
- Chairman Pope stated that the draft overarching goals will be discussed and voted at next week's School Committee meeting and then be put out for public comment. The time of the School Committee meeting was changed from 7:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- B. Superintendent Evaluation** – Ms. Presser presented a slide show on the superintendent rubric and goals. She stated that each of the 20 indicators must be considered but the committee can weight them based on the goals that are created. The elements do not need to be used to evaluate the superintendent. However, if elements are not used, descriptors must be developed for the indicators.

Ms. Presser stated that the superintendent and the School Committee will discuss and agree on what the goals will be. There must be one student learning goal, one professional practice goal, and 2-4 district goals. Dr. Safier indicated that his understanding is that the superintendent brings suggested goals forward to the School Committee for discussion.

Mrs. Gilman suggested that since the superintendent evaluation is of interest to all members of the committee, that the discussion on this matter take place at this meeting as opposed to the Personnel Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday. Ms. Teixeira believes the more conversation the committee has about this topic the better. She indicated that she would like to receive a report from Dr. Safier during the Personnel Subcommittee meeting and then discuss it with the full committee. Ms. Presser suggested that some of the discussions tonight will inform what goes on in the Personnel Subcommittee meeting, with a recommendation coming back to the full committee based on both discussions. Mrs. Gilman requested that the Personnel Subcommittee work on a timeline for the evaluation cycle.

Ms. Presser reviewed the evaluation cycle and stated that the first part of the process is determining the timeline for the cycle. Other decisions to be made include delegation of responsibility for drafting the document and how the results will be used.

With respect to self-assessment, Dr. Safier stated that his understanding is that it should be a brief synopsis of how he feels he is doing in particular areas, which Ms. Presser confirmed. She noted that the self-assessment is not part of what the superintendent is being evaluated on and that the professional practice goal would come out of the self-assessment. Dr. Safier indicated that the district goals could come out of the rubrics, as well. Mrs. Gilman believes the self-assessment is a good way for School Committee members to determine if they have had the right type of connection with the superintendent during the year in terms of ongoing communication.

Ms. Presser suggested that the superintendent and the School Committee discuss upfront and agree on the artifacts of evidence that will be presented to show that progress has been made on the goals, and Dr. Safier suggested that the artifacts of evidence may become evident from the nature of the goals themselves.

Ms. Presser stated that the School Committee must evaluate the superintendent on the professional practice goal and the student learning goal but not necessarily on the district goals if they choose not to. Mr. Gross indicated that the committee needs to be conscious of the fact that there may be some goals that the evidence shows have not been achieved because of things beyond the superintendent's control. Ms. Presser stated that the committee is not just looking at whether or not the goal was met but whether an effort was made. Goals can be tweaked at mid-cycle if they become unrealistic because of factors beyond anyone's control.

Dr. Safier distributed draft professional practice and district goals, one of which is curriculum mapping, alignment, and development of a five-year plan. He reviewed the key actions, benchmarks, and a sample timeline for that goal. There was a discussion about multi-year goals.

Chairman Pope left the meeting at 7:16 p.m. to attend another meeting and turned the meeting over to Vice Chairperson Gilman.

Ms. Presser stated that the next step is for the School Committee to develop SMART goals for the year, which will include superintendent evaluation and, if they choose, governance goals.

Ms. Teixeira would like to get Dr. Safier's view on the evaluation process at some point. Dr. Safier noted that the School Committee's and superintendent's responsibilities are listed in the superintendent guidelines. Ms. Presser recommended focusing on the MASC document with respect to the process. She also recommended setting a date by which the evaluation tool will be ready so that Dr. Safier knows the goals he is going to be evaluated on.

Between now and the next meeting, Ms. Presser recommended that the committee work on the goals and the tool and vote on the overarching goals.

The next governance workshop was scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room, during which the committee will discuss having effective meetings, working on a year-long agenda, and working on presentations related to the goals.

V. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 4 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Governance Workshop of December 3, 2012 at 7:46 p.m.

All reference documents and reports are filed in the Superintendent's office.

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners.

Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 6, 2012

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

6:00 p.m.

Members Present

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Roger Garberg, Vice Chairman
Kathy Clancy

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent
Patricia Wegmann, Special Education Director
Ann-Marie Jordan, Student Health Coordinator

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION

- A. Anti-Bullying Policy** – Chairperson Gilman began the meeting by stating that this policy required the district to review it in December 2012. She welcomed Ann-Marie Jordan to the meeting, noting that Ms. Jordan had developed the policy two years ago. Chairperson Gilman noted that cyber-bullying is included in the policy and that Section 1.2 addresses conflicts that are not necessarily bullying. There is also a section on prohibition of unacceptable behavior. The district also has a Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan which uses the Mass. Department of Education template as a model.

Ms. Jordan reported that incident reports have been developed as part of this process, as well as a variety of professional development for staff, such as Second Step, which is a social/emotional learning curriculum. There is also a middle school version being used in health classes. With respect to assessment of reporting, Ms. Jordan indicated that the Essex County District Attorney has had training sessions. In addition, Ms. Jordan cited two possible experts that may come in the spring to do more training on reporting and investigating. She noted that at the outset, there were more reports of bullying than there are currently and that the principals are taking their legal responsibilities seriously. More formal processes for investigations have been created, emphasizing the importance of sending investigations to the Central Office.

Ms. Jordan reviewed the reports of incidents at each school last year and to date this year. She stated that all incidents should be reported and investigated but that the investigation may determine that the incident was not a case of bullying. Chairperson Gilman stated that she would be interested in finding out how many of the incidents were cyber-bullying, and Kathy Clancy would be interested in finding out if there are more incidents in the fall than later in the year. Dr. Safier would like to get copies of the investigation reports to see how thorough they are and what actions have been taken.

With respect to the higher number of reports at the middle school as compared to the high school and elementary school, Ms. Wegmann noted that students have access to guidance staff to report incidents of bullying, which is not the case in the elementary schools. Ms. Jordan indicated that the highest rates of bullying occur between fifth and eighth grade and that it tapers down in high school. Bullying prevention has been integrated into the middle school health curriculum through empathy training, problem solving, and decision making. Ms. Jordan emphasized that the SAILS program is a whole-school approach to social/emotional learning.

Chairperson Gilman suggested having an annual program for parents/guardians at the middle school regarding bullying prevention. Ms. Jordan recommended working with parents/guardians with respect to social media and technology and the importance of overseeing what children are doing online. She stated that we may be able to get someone from the Attorney General's office to come and speak to parents/guardians. Dr. Safier indicated that the Mass. Aggression Reduction Center may also provide that type of program.

There was a discussion about collection of data on bullying. Ms. Jordan reported that the Second Step program has an online edition which includes summative assessments. She noted that bullying is not something we are going to wipe out. It is an aspect of our culture as well as part of a developmental stage that occurs in children. However, we can start to measure some of the more specific aspects of the interventions that we are using to see what types of impacts those interventions are having. She also recommended looking at general discipline data. Chairperson Gilman suggested posting educational resources on the website for parents/guardians.

Ms. Jordan stated that Responsive Classroom is still being used in the elementary schools. Responsive Classroom is an approach, whereas Second Step is a curriculum that includes lessons that teachers can use to create a pro-social environment.

Ms. Jordan believes that "The Yellow Dress" performance will be taking place at the high school again this year. In addition to the performance, there will also be some classroom discussion. She has talked with the middle school guidance counselors about a similar performance for students there. Chairperson Gilman suggested that Ms. Jordan write a "My View" column every year with a parent handout reminding the community of all the programs we have and to show that it is an ongoing process.

- B. Review of Walker Institute of Behavior Management** – Ms. Wegmann reported on Walker Partnerships and the Walker School and indicated that they developed an agency that provides consultation with school districts on program development and home-based services. She indicated that she started a relationship with them to provide professional development for our paraprofessionals and through that, she found out some of their program evaluation services.

There was a discussion about the use of timeout rooms. Ms. Wegmann noted that there are only six students in the district that have the use of timeout rooms identified as part of their behavior plan. Ms. Wegmann reported that she shared the timeout protocol with SEPAC members.

The Walker Institute recommended the development of a referral system and allowing Steve Douglas and the behavior paras to consult more often in a more formal way. Other recommendations included uniformity of behavior plans and consistent use of social/emotional curriculum in each building.

Ms. Wegmann is not sure if teachers have been informed that it is their responsibility to work with students on the Second Step curriculum. Ms. Jordan recommended that each building have a key contact person (i.e. school psychologist or adjustment counselor) for teachers to talk to if they have questions about Second Step. Dr. Safier noted that teacher training will be completed by the end of the school year.

Ms. Wegmann noted that the district has switched from the Crisis Prevention Institute nonviolent crisis intervention program to Safety Care, which is a similar program on how to restrain students and de-escalate emergency situations. Three people in the district have been trained to train staff in Safety Care and have started their first round of training.

Chairperson Gilman commended Ms. Wegmann for making parents/guardians aware of SEPAC meetings. Mr. Garberg reported that a couple of parents/guardians have questioned why they are getting calls about SEPAC meetings if they do not have a child with special needs. Ms. Wegmann stated that she may include a statement in the all-calls that even though parents/guardians may not have a child with a special need, that SEPAC provides information forums for all parents/guardians.

Ms. Wegmann and Ms. Jordan left the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

- C. Math Content Institute (BSRI) and Math Goals** – Dr. Safier stated that he has been talking with BSRI with regard to some specific actions we need to take. He noted that they have a math coach and that he is looking to fund that with grants. There is also money from donors that could be used to pay for the Math Content Institute. The professional development consists of four consecutive days sometime in August for up to 24 teachers. BSRI pays the teachers \$100/day and the district will make up the difference. There will also be six sessions that will take place over the course of next year. Dr. Safier is hoping that the majority of teachers will participate. He indicated that he is also looking to create an administrative position for a K-8 math/science coordinator next year.

Mr. Bach noted that the standards based report card is now out of alignment with the Common Core Standards and needs to be completely rewritten. He believes the standards based report card was a good return on our time and investment initially. The

math curriculum also needs to be modified and adapted. There was a discussion about grants for MCAS remediation classes and tutoring.

- D. Rationale for Digital Environment** – Dr. Safier indicated that we need to sharpen our rationale for moving forward with enhancing technology in the schools. Mr. Bach reviewed some key points in the Report of the NASBE Study Group on the role of technology in schools entitled “Ensuring Educational Technology Meets the Needs of Students Today – and Tomorrow.” He noted that things have changed rapidly in the way students acquire information and collaborate and communicate with each other. They no longer use encyclopedias or go to the library to do research but use iPhones and iPads to do that research. If we have schools where the natural way of finding information is so disconnected from the way that students gather information now, we are risking lack of engagement.

There was a discussion about information retrieval versus gaining knowledge and whether students gain knowledge when gathering information from electronic devices. Mr. Bach stated that committing key things to memory is still essential, and Dr. Safier indicated that the digital world is about retrieval and use of information. The district will start working with teachers on the use of technology before expanding it to students.

Mr. Bach stated that students need to be taught how to use technology appropriately, how to find reliable information on the Internet, how to work collaboratively, and how to stay focused and not get distracted while using these devices. He stated that the district should not purchase technology for the sake of being current but to use it for achieving student growth goals. Chairperson Gilman requested that we begin to collect data and report on how many students have Internet access. Mr. Bach suggested having the students create a survey to collect that data.

Mr. Garberg pointed out that there are things in the report that are very troubling, such as students sleeping with their iPhones and texting friends in the middle of the night. He stated that the report alludes to issues which are potentially serious and that there is no uniformity and appreciation for use of technology. He does not believe we know the diversity of needs out there when it comes to integrating technology into the curriculum. Mr. Bach questioned whether the students in the report were guided on how to use the technology. He noted that the students are going to have the devices no matter what. The question is whether we allow the devices to be a background distraction and a means of communicating around what they do in school or whether we coach and guide them to use the devices to access important information and work collaboratively.

Mr. Garberg noted that the article also refers to multitasking as a skill, which he believes is in some dispute. Mr. Bach does not applaud multitasking as a gift that students have. However, they do it, and we need to teach them how to focus three devices on the same thing for a certain period of time.

Chairperson Gilman would like to consider including in the O’Maley Performing Arts class a section on the appropriate and respectful use of technology when interacting with

people. Dr. Safier stated that the report recommends that that be a large part of an integrated approach to use and application of technology.

- E. Application for Community Grant – Linking Community/Organizational Efforts (GEF) with School District** – Mr. Bach stated that thanks to Tina Raimo, Executive Director of the Gloucester Education Foundation, the 21st Century Skills grant preparatory phase is alive and well. They are focusing on doing a needs assessment for the high school as a 21st century learning center. They will be meeting next week to talk about what they learned from talking to people at different sites. Mr. Bach noted that the state is prioritizing high school applications because of the lack of applicants.
- F. Logic Model and Goal Setting** – Dr. Safier stated that the logic model is used to figure out how to accomplish the two-year math goal. He recommended that in order for the School Committee’s SMART goals to be firmly established and grounded, that the logic model be applied.
- G. Students Returning from Charter School** – Mr. Garberg reported in discussion that it has been suggested by a number of people in the community with good will towards the district that we make a very strong public effort to let it be known that if the charter school’s charter is revoked, our district is prepared to receive any students that might be coming back from the charter school and that we are looking forward to bringing them back into the district.

Dr. Safier stated that a number of students have come back already and that our approach is always to be as welcoming and compensatory as is necessary to provide an education for any student that comes across our threshold. He indicated that he does not intend to say anything publicly until the charter school’s status is formalized on December 18th. He stated that charter school parents are welcome to call him at any time if they are concerned about the situation. Kathy Clancy noted that this should apply to any new students who come into the district from anywhere else. She recommended that a couple of months after the beginning of school, the principal should call new families to ask how things are going.

III. ACTION – None

IV. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the Program Subcommittee Meeting of December 6, 2012 at 8:40 p.m.

All reference documents and reports are filed in the Superintendent’s office.

Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary

Gloucester Public Schools

Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners

Richard Safier, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
6 School House Road
Gloucester, MA 01930

Phone: (978) 281-9800 / Fax: (978) 281-9899

Email: rsafier@gloucester.k12.ma.us

Tragedy in Connecticut December 14, 2012

A terrible tragedy happened today in Newtown, CT, resulting in the death of students and staff in an elementary school. Our hearts go out to the staff and students and their families of the Sandy Hook Elementary School.

When a tragedy like this occurs, everyone's sense of safety becomes uncertain. As adults in the community, we find ourselves trying to both answer our own and our children's questions. These questions, however, have no real answers. Dr. David Schonfeld, the Director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, offers the following guidelines for parents and other caregivers in talking to children about tragic events like this. I hope that you will find this information helpful in talking with your children this weekend and beyond.

Preschool

Keep it simple. Even though you may think that young children are unaware of the news, if the tragedy is being discussed among parents, chances are that they will know intuitively that something has happened. Dr. Schonfeld suggests talking to young children in simple and concrete terms. You might say, "There was a man who brought a gun to a school and hurt some people badly." Be honest and direct, but skip the details, which can be traumatizing.

Reassure, but do not lie. It is common for a preschooler to express very direct fears like, "I am worried that someone will come shoot us." If they do, Dr. Schonfeld says that parents should reassure their children without making any false promises or dismissing their concerns. "Tell them it's very unlikely something like that will occur."

Limit media exposure. You do not need to hide the newspaper during a tragedy, but you should not have the news running 24/7, either. According to Dr. Schonfeld, studies have shown that repeated exposure to graphic details makes it harder for a child to cope with a tragedy. Watch the news when young children are not in the room, and if they do hear a scary-sounding news story, address it simply and let them know that you are doing everything you can to keep them safe.

Talk about what real guns can do. Whether they are playing with toy guns or simply making their fingers into the shape of a gun, preschoolers are typically aware of guns and need to understand the difference between a toy and a real weapon, says Hayley Sherwood, a psychologist who works with

children who are victims of trauma. "I would say, 'It's okay to play pretend guns, but real guns can hurt people and very scary things can happen with real guns.'"

Grade School

Be honest, but not explicit. Like preschoolers, the best approach for school-age children is a direct and honest one. Sherwood suggests starting the conversation by asking what, if anything, they have heard about the shooting in school from their classmates or teacher. Correct any misinformation and answer questions honestly, with simple answers that do not delve into explicit, potentially traumatizing details.

Find out their fears. If you are going to try and comfort a child, you have to find out what is worrying her/him, says Dr. Schonfeld. "The fears children have might be different than adults and might be distorted and incomplete," he says. Speak in a calm, empathetic tone and make sure any conversation you have includes lots of opportunities for your child to ask questions and share his/her concerns.

Share your feelings. It can be tempting to look like the stoic parent who has everything under control, but sharing some of your worries and fears -- without losing it -- is actually beneficial for children. "It's not useful to see parents overwhelmed, but we can't ask our kids to share without sharing some ourselves," says Dr. Schonfeld.

Talk about safety measures in place. Let children know that the adults in their lives are doing everything they can to assure them that they will stay safe. Talk about what you do to keep your home safe, such as locking doors or not opening the door for strangers. Do not falsely promise that these measures will definitely protect you and your children, but reassure your children that the chances something bad will happen are very slim.

Middle/High School

Be direct and honest. Sherwood says that parents should level with their children. "I know that you know what happened. If you want to talk about it I'm here." If they ask a question such as, "Why would somebody do this?" be honest that people sometimes have lots of anger and bad feelings that make them think that they want to hurt other people.

Think about social media exposure. Social media tools, like Facebook and Twitter, can make your children feel like they are very much a part of a tragedy such as the Newtown, CT school shooting, says Dr. Schonfeld. While it is not realistic to ask your children to stay off their Smart Phones or avoid their Twitter feeds completely you should advise them to think carefully about social media exposure and how much time they spend reading, following, and responding to what is on these outlets. And, if the constant stream of information upsets them, reassure your children that you are available to talk. Make sure they know that it is okay to stop paying attention to the story and do something else. Reassure them that feeling different or angry is okay. Also reassure your children that an individual who commits such a crime has other serious problems and take the opportunity to talk about other troubling feelings your children might have.

Approach the subject from the third person. As we know, adolescents are not exactly known for their willingness to communicate with their parents, but Schonfeld states that you can sometimes back into a conversation by saying something such as the following: "So, I heard about this on the news. What were your friends saying about this?" Never force your children to talk, but let them know you are there if they are ever ready to discuss a situation.

Do not feel obligated to give a reason for what happened. “Resist the temptation to come up with simple answers to complex situations”, says Dr. Schonfeld. Although parents often want to provide a reason for why someone would commit such a crime, the reality is that we just do not know. And that is okay.

Click on or place in your browser the following link to see an excellent video on the subject of talking to children about tragic events like this: <http://bcove.me/ofg7cq3z>

If your child exhibits any unusual fears that you feel his or her school should know about, please contact your child’s teacher or principal. We will be happy to work with you to address these issues. Life is precious, and the holidays can be difficult for many. May we all be reminded today of what is really important—family, friends, and caring for one another.



The Gloucester Public Schools
Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, life-long learners

Tammy Morgan, Principal
15 Hickory Street
Gloucester, MA 01930
Phone 978-282-3030 / Fax 978-282-3006
tmorgan@gloucester.k12.ma.us

December 17, 2012

Dear Plum Cove Families:

We all share sadness and shock over the news of the horrific tragedy at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone who has been touched by this tragedy.

These types of events create a tremendous amount of fear and uncertainty about our safety. Please be assured that we are vigilant in creating a safe and secure environment for our students, staff, and volunteers. One way in which you can help is to be sure you sign in with the office upon entering the building. Our staff will be asked to question any one who does not have a staff or visitor badge.

We have a new security system that uses a buzzer, which allows school personnel to unlock the door electronically. During school hours, every door that leads into the building will be locked. To gain entrance into the building you will need to press the front door bell.

Before school and after school are set aside for appointments only. This time is dedicated for teachers to conduct confidential meetings, phone calls, and staff issues. If you need to speak with a staff member, please contact them in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please note that we strive to make all parents, volunteers, and visitors feel welcome at Plum Cove, however, safety and professionalism will always remain our first priority.

We understand that children may react in many ways in response to news of this tragic incident. We would like to provide you with a few resources for helping children cope with tragedies. Attached is a helpful and practical outline of steps parents can take to support young children. I also encourage you to check the Gloucester Public Schools website at www.gloucesterschools.org for additional information and resources.

If your child exhibits any unusual fears that you feel we should be aware of, please do not hesitate to contact me, your child's teacher or Nicole Alessio, the school psychologist. We are happy to work with you to address these issues.

Sincerely,

Tammy Morgan, Principal



INTERAGENCY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR SCHOOLS

Understanding between the Gloucester Public Schools, The Gloucester Police Department, and the Essex County District Attorney's Office.

This document recognizes the formal working relationships agreed upon by participating agencies to provide a safe and violence-free educational setting.

I. GENERAL POLICIES

- A. The Gloucester Public Schools, the Gloucester Police Department, and the Essex County District Attorney's Office agree to develop and coordinate their response to violent, delinquent or criminal acts by students, including weapons reporting and alcohol and other drug use, that occur on school premises, school buses, or at school-related events. Additionally, the policies and procedures developed will pertain to non-students and other visitors on school premises or at school-related events. To ensure a safe educational environment, this cooperative effort between the school administration, law enforcement, and agencies supports "zero tolerance" for violence, weapons, drugs, harassment and civil rights violations, in accordance with State and Federal Safe School Acts.

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37H, requires each school district to have a Code of Conduct reflected in student handbooks, setting forth standards and procedures to assure building security and safety of students and school personnel. This code should include the suspension and exclusion procedures, the disciplinary measures, and due process rights in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or civil rights violations. In addition, reference to this Memorandum shall be made in these handbooks.

- B. Each of the participating agencies agrees, within the statutory authority of its agency, that every effort will be made to share information to provide a safe and violence-free educational setting. These agencies include the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Youth Services, the Department of Mental Health, the Essex County District Attorney's Office, the Gloucester Police Department and the Gloucester School Department.

II. REPORTING PROCESS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Under M.G.L. Ch. 119, Section 51A, school personnel (mandated reporters) who have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse (including sexual abuse) or from neglect, shall report such condition to the Department of Children and Families. *"Reasonable cause to believe" means known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect, regardless of whether the person or persons responsible for the abuse or neglect was in the position of caretaker.*

Included within this definition are incidents of abuse by other students, as well as school personnel. If the incident involves criminal conduct, including physical abuse, violation of a restraining order, assault and battery, indecent assault and battery, rape, or rape and abuse of a child under age 16 (so-called "statutory rape"), school officials shall also report the incident to the police.

During the ten day 51A investigation (Section 51B) school personnel are required to disclose to DCF any information that it determines is relevant to the investigation, including student record information. School staff is expected to cooperate with DCF during this investigation, especially when circumstances of the case necessitate interviewing the child at school. It is suggested that such interviews be conducted in the presence of a teacher or other school personnel, without prior notification to parents or guardians if notice could put the child at further risk.

III. REPORTING PROCESS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT AND POLICE

The school principals are responsible for reporting criminal activity to the police department to ensure a coordinated response. For any life-threatening or emergency situations, calls should be made to 911. Other calls needing an immediate (but non-emergency) response should go to the main police department. Follow-up and on-going communication will be provided.

School officials retain their sole prerogative to impose any disciplinary sanctions for infractions of school rules and policies in addition to any police involvement or investigation that may be warranted. School notification to the student and his/her parent or legal guardian should be an integral part of this process.

When the school has reported an incident to the police, the police will be responsible for making the decision as to the course of the criminal or delinquency investigation. In certain cases, based on the information and facts provided to the police, an incident report prepared by the school may be requested and filed in lieu of a formal police investigation. Such incident reports may also be sent to the police department concerning repeated violations of school policies that do not meet the standard for formal charges (e.g., chronic disruption and verbal abuse).

The school agrees to notify the police department before suspending a student under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H½, if the suspension is based on information received by the school of a pending felony charge or felony disposition.

- A. Any teacher or other school employee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has committed a violation of the school's discipline code or what is considered a mandatory reportable act, as defined here, on school premises, school buses or at school related events shall ensure the student appears before the principal or designee.

Mandatory reportable acts include:

- Any serious incident of assaultive behavior, such as any assault resulting in an injury of a staff or student, provoked or unprovoked attacks, or use of a dangerous weapon as defined in the student handbook and/or statute, or use of any object in a manner capable of causing injury;
- Destruction or attempted destruction of property by any means, including graffiti, arson, or vandalism;
- Theft of school property or personal property;
- Violation of a restraining order, a "stay away" order, or a no-contact order;
- Threats to assault another or to damage property; bomb threats, false fire alarms;
- Incidents of domestic/dating/relationship violence;
- Repeated incidents of criminal harassment;
- Any sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behavior which may include indecent exposure, sexual touching or fondling, and forcible rape or rape and abuse of a child (statutory rape);
- Civil rights incidents: any assaults, threats, destruction of property, or harassment committed with intent to intimidate because of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, or with intent to interfere with one's free exercise of civil rights.
- Unlawful possession of a dangerous weapon as defined by statute or as defined in the student handbook;

- Actual or constructive possession (the ability to exercise dominion and control) of what is reasonably believed to be a controlled substance as defined by state law;
 - Having a reasonable belief that any student has sold or offered to sell or otherwise distributed a drug which is believed to be a controlled substance under the law; and
 - Finding any student who is reasonably believed to be in possession of or to be under the influence of alcohol, inhalant, or other drugs.
- B. In accord with the procedure for school discipline, the principal or designee shall ask the reporting teacher/employee what happened and take custody of any physical evidence. The principal or designee shall inform the student and his/her parent or legal guardian of the nature of the offense. The principal or designee shall offer the student the opportunity to respond to the teacher/employee report if the school intends to impose disciplinary action.

The Principal or designee shall in the case of a mandatory reportable act notify the police of the incident, even if unable to contact the student's parent or guardian first, and shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian that upon report the police may conduct an investigation independent of school discipline. The Principal or designee shall also report to the police the existence of any physical evidence related to the incident. All contraband (e.g., drugs, alcohol, firearms, dangerous weapons and stolen goods) or any other physical or documentary evidence found by the school shall be immediately shown to the responding police department, which shall take custody of such contraband or evidence.

- C. In addition, the Principal will comply with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37L, concerning any incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises, regardless of whether it occurred during school hours, and whether or not the student has been expelled. Consistent with the law, the Superintendent shall file copies of the "weapons" report with the police chief, the Department of Children and Families, and the local school committee.

D. Search and Seizure

It is the policy of the Gloucester Public Schools to subject a student to a search of his or her person and/or personal possessions, including clothing, gym bag, purse, backpack, or motor vehicle, if the authorized school personnel have, independent of information provided by the police, a reasonable suspicion to believe that such student is carrying or concealing material, the possession of which is prohibited by federal, state, or local law, or by the provisions of the School Discipline Code (e.g., alcohol, drugs, illegal

substances, or weapons or any other object which may result in physical injury or harm to students on the school grounds or in the school building). Lockers and desks used by students remain the property of the school and may be opened without notice at any time as part of non-investigatory school practices. The contents of personal items found in desks and lockers may be searched as provided by law. The Principal(s) or designee shall include this practice in the student handbook or inform students in writing at the beginning of each school year. The Principal or designee shall keep a record of such searches detailing time and date, the reason for the search, the witness (es) to the search, what or who was searched, and what was found. If contraband or evidence of a crime is found, the police shall be notified at once.

- E. The Police will communicate regularly with the school administration to share information with the schools on felony arrests and any other community concerns that affect the safety and general welfare of all students.

IV. PROSECUTORIAL ALTERNATIVES

A. JUVENILE DIVERSION

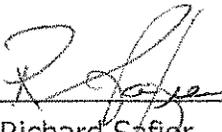
When appropriate, first time offenders under age 17 who commit minor misdemeanors will be referred to the Essex County District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program. The Juvenile Diversion Program is an alternative to the court system. The District Attorney's Office will determine whether such offender will be offered this alternative. Participating youth are required to attend and complete counseling/education programs, perform community service and when applicable, pay restitution. Youth who successfully complete the Juvenile Diversion Program prior to issuance of a complaint will have no court record. Cases that are not appropriate for the Juvenile Diversion will be prosecuted through the Juvenile Justice System.

B. YOUTHFUL DIVERSION

Youthful Diversion is offered to first-time offenders between the ages of 17 and 21 involved in certain minor drug and alcohol offenses. As with Juvenile Diversion, participants must attend and complete a counseling/education program and perform community service in lieu of going through the court system.

V. COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

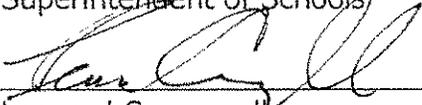
The District Attorney's Office will continue to facilitate the Community Collaborative Initiative as mandated by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 12, Section 32 and seeks the participation of the below-mentioned agencies pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 12, Section 32.



Dr. Richard Saffier
Superintendent of Schools

11/7/12

Date



Leonard Campanello
Chief of Police

11/5/12

Date

Jonathan W. Blodgett
Essex District Attorney

Date