

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 6, 2014

Room 114 – District Office

5:00 p.m.

Members Present

Michelle Sweet, Chairperson

Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson

Jack O'Maley

Administration Present

Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent

Patti Wegmann, Special Education

Director

Cindy Juncker, Nurse Leader

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Sweet called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION

At this time, the agenda was taken out of order.

D. Implementation of Audio and Video Recording of Meetings – Ms. Wegmann stated that this policy was drafted by Attorney Michael Joyce due to the fact that some parents and advocates have been recording IEP meetings. She indicated that this creates a lot of discomfort among staff because they feel they are being scrutinized and that something they say could be misconstrued. She believes that people are much more relaxed and speak more freely when they are not being recorded. Mr. O'Maley stated that he feels that teachers are compromising their professionalism if they do not say what they are doing.

Ms. Wegmann noted that the draft policy allows parents who have certain disabilities that impact their ability to hear what people are saying to audiotape or videotape a meeting after requesting authorization from the superintendent.

Ms. Teixeira and Mr. Bach expressed concern that simply discussing this policy will result in an increase in the frequency of meetings being recorded. Mr. Bach suggested that Ms. Wegmann get a sense from other districts on how frequently IEP meetings are recorded.

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern with parents using their iPhones or some other personal device to record meetings and stated that if we are allowing recording of meetings, the district should have the equipment to do so and provide copies to parents. She requested that Ms. Wegmann do more research on what other districts are doing and how they are doing it before this policy is recommended to the full School Committee.

After discussion, on a motion by Mr. O'Maley, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor zero opposed, to continue this matter to the next meeting to receive more information.

(Ms. Wegmann left the meeting at 5:20 p.m.)

- A. Revised Wellness Policy, File ADF** – Cindy Juncker reported that this policy was revised in accordance with the recommendations made by the subcommittee back in December. She stated that BMI data is still being collected but is only sent home when parents request it. With respect to the paragraph regarding the Summer Food Service Program, the phrase “has volunteered and” was inserted before the word “will.”

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mr. O'Maley, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor zero opposed, to recommend to the full School Committee that we adopt the Wellness Policy, File ADF, as amended by the Program Subcommittee on February 6, 2014.

Ms. Juncker reported that students are going to participate in the Wellness Committee meeting on February 25th to address concerns with food service. That committee's report will go to the superintendent, together with the goals set by the committee.

(Ms. Juncker left the meeting at 5:34 p.m.)

- G. Update on Writing Across Content Area Initiatives** – Mr. Bach reported on what is happening at the middle school with respect to this matter and stated that he would like to invite J.P. Ware, a part-time writing coach at O'Maley, to the next meeting to discuss it. The subcommittee agreed.
- E. Update on Standards Based Report Card Initiative** – Mr. Bach distributed and reviewed the generic report card currently in use at the elementary schools, which does not align to the Common Core standards, does not have a professional appearance, and is slightly different at all of the schools.

Mr. Bach also distributed and reviewed a proposed report card and indicated that teachers will have two opportunities to provide feedback on the standards that are included in it, with a final draft completed in June. He stated that math, reading and language will be done next year and that writing, science and social studies will be

done the following year. A mid-term progress report will also be included on the report card.

Mr. Bach also reviewed a scoring rubric from the Billerica Public Schools, which provides teachers with prompts to assist in determining students' grades.

Finally, Mr. Bach stated that the new report cards will be in iPass, which will streamline the process for teachers and allow parents to log on to look at their child's report cards and attendance. There was a discussion about getting confirmation from parents that they have seen the report cards and translating it for parents who cannot read English.

- F. Update on Possible Math Exploratory** – Mr. Bach reviewed the status of the Investigations math program, noting that it is now ten years old, is not aligned to the Common Core, provides no guidance for teachers, and requires significant supplementation by teachers, who all use something different. Consequently, the district is in the exploratory phase of consideration of a new math program.

Mr. Bach reviewed the responses to a recent survey he provided to teachers on the Investigations math program, indicating that 76% of them are supplementing the program, 71% believe that assessments are not well-aligned, and 78% believe math instruction is inconsistent across the district.

Mr. Bach stated that during February and April, the exploratory committee will be looking at two new programs, "Go Math" and "Math in Focus." The committee will do some site visits to other districts and present their findings to the full staff. Teachers will then have an opportunity to weigh in confidentially on whether there is a need for a new program and whether they are ready for a new program. If some teachers are ready to implement a new program and others are not, volunteers could take the publisher's training during the summer, use the program, and become the trainers for the following year.

Mr. Bach noted that if we do not change the math program, using the math portion of the new report card is not going to work. If we stay with the Investigations program, we would need to put some work into it to comply with the Common Core standards.

Finally, there was a discussion about MCAS math scores. Mr. Bach stated that we made gains this year but that we still have an achievement gap that needs to be addressed. At the very least, he believes we need to adopt something for our special education teachers to use.

- B. School District Annual Report Policy, File CM** – Given the amount of reporting to the School Committee that takes place throughout the year, including facilities reports, special education reports, professional development reports, assessment

reports, the district improvement plan, and the superintendent's goals, Mr. Bach asked what the School Committee is looking for that is not already being reported on.

Ms. Teixeira stated that years ago, a former School Committee member received an annual report from another district, which she believes is more of a promotional document showcasing the schools to the public. Ms. Teixeira thinks it would be nice to have such a document but stated that the district probably does not have the resources to do it. Mr. O'Maley suggested that this information could be put on the website and noted that he had difficulty finding certain information on the website.

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mr. O'Maley, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor zero opposed, to request from the full School Committee a decision on whether to adopt the practice of the current School District Annual Report Policy, File CM, or to refer the policy back to the Program Subcommittee to amend it to reflect the needs and goals of the district.

- C. Athletic and Cheerleading Booster Organization Policy, File KJAA** – Chairperson Sweet stated that the Docksiders, JROTC and theater booster organizations should be included in this policy. Ms. Teixeira recommended that someone reach out to MASC to find out what policies exist with respect to this matter.

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mr. O'Maley, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor zero opposed, to continue this matter to the next meeting to receive more information.

III. ACTION – See Items II.A, II.B, II.C and II.D.

IV. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mr. O'Maley, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the Program Subcommittee Meeting of February 6, 2014 at 6:43 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*