

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 2, 2016

District Office – Break Room

5:00 p.m.

Members Present

Kathy Clancy, Chairperson

Michelle Sweet, Vice Chairperson

Joel Favazza, Member (5:10 p.m.)

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent

Dr. Arthur Unobskey, Asst. Superintendent

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Clancy called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION

A. Review of Attendance Policies

1. O'Maley Innovation Middle School Attendance Policy, File JE – Dr. Safier reviewed and the committee discussed the changes to the policy to bring it into compliance with the law (M.G.L. c.76, §2). A reference to the law was added to the end of the policy.

(Mr. Favazza joined the meeting at 5:10 p.m.)

After discussion, the reference to summer school on the second page of the policy was deleted.

On a motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Mr. Favazza, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the full School Committee that we approve the O'Maley Innovation Middle School Attendance Policy, File JE, as amended.

2. Gloucester High School Attendance Policy, File JE – Dr. Safier reviewed and the committee discussed the changes to the policy to bring it into compliance with the law (M.G.L. c.76, §2). Some of the paragraphs were re-ordered to make it clearer. There was a discussion about the number of absences at the high school and how to incentivize attendance. Dr. Unobskey discussed the disciplinary process for cutting class, which is included in the GHS Code of Conduct.

On a motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Mr. Favazza, it was unanimously

VOTED: 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the full School Committee that we approve the Gloucester High School Attendance Policy, File JE, as amended.

- B. Review of Gloucester High School Start Time** – Mr. Favazza referred this matter to the subcommittee because he would like to allow more sleep time for teens. Dr. Safier distributed several articles regarding the pros and cons of delaying school start times. Dr. Unobskey discussed the research on the subject, which indicates that teens have trouble falling asleep earlier at night and are fresher later in the day.

With respect to fall sports, Mr. Favazza noted that there are lights at Newell Stadium and that practices could take place there. He also suggested that on days when there are games, student athletes could miss the last block of the day but would have to make up the work. Dr. Safier took issue with that and stated that it would be better if all of the schools in a region agreed to make their day longer. He also has difficulty with the idea of practicing before school because it defeats the purpose of starting school later. Dr. Safier stated that the sanctity of classroom time needs to be preserved and that there is mandated time on learning.

Dr. Unobskey stated that he will study where we are regionally. Dr. Safier suggested that he also study what concessions schools that have a delayed start time had to make.

(Mr. Favazza left the meeting to attend another meeting.)

Dr. Unobskey stated that with respect to the research, the data is pretty soft and not based on scientific studies. However, he believes there is some validity to it.

Chairperson Clancy noted that delaying the start of school has contract implications, as well, because the school day is contained in the contract. She would like to get feedback from families and kids at some point, both here and in districts that already have delayed start times. She noted that some parents in Boston are choosing to have their kids get up an hour earlier to go to a school on the other side of the city and that some parents choose to send their kids to private schools 40 minutes away from home.

Chairperson Clancy stated that she would like to see actual implementation information. Dr. Safier agreed and indicated that we need to talk to districts that have done it or are planning on doing it and put together a report of the pros and cons. The consensus of the committee was to continue gathering information, to visit schools that have done it, and to conduct a simple survey next winter or spring. Dr. Unobskey

indicated that he will work with the athletic director to identify the impact it would have on scheduling practices and games.

III. ACTION – See Item II.A.1 and II.A.2.

IV. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Chairperson Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 2 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the Program Subcommittee Meeting of June 2, 2016 at 6:14 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*