

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 10, 2019

District Office Conference Room

2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

5:00 p.m.

Members Present

Kathy Clancy, Chairperson

Michelle Sweet, Vice Chairperson

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent (6:02)

James Cook, GHS Principal

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Clancy called the meeting to order at 5:01 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.)

- B. Crowdfunding Background Information and Model Policies** – Dr. Safier reported that he recently listened to a webinar sponsored by MASS and produced by donorschoose.org. He reviewed the recommendations from the webinar on what districts should do to ensure that teachers are making requests appropriately. He noted that the webinar also talked about financial accountability, ownership of materials and supplies, and safety and privacy of students. There was a discussion about the district pre-approving websites that can be used for crowdfunding, and the committee reviewed the model crowdfunding policy provided by Dr. Safier. Dr. Safier also provided Shrewsbury’s crowdfunding policy, which he will incorporate into a draft policy to be discussed at the next meeting.
- A. Attendance Language Regarding Absences** – Chairperson Clancy indicated that she has heard criticism from many parents about the term “unexcused absence” in reference to an absence for a sick day and is wondering if there is a different term that can be used to describe that kind of absence. Dr. Safier noted that students are allowed six absences per quarter before any potential consequences are incurred, and there is an opportunity to appeal unexcused absences. Mr. Cook stated that Beverly High School uses the terms “documented absence,” which does not count toward the number of days allowed, “excused absence,” which is for sick days called in by a parent, and “unexcused absence,” which means the student is truant. Dr. Safier indicated that he and Mr. Cook will come up with some language defining the term “unexcused absence” to be included in the GHS handbook, which will be reviewed at the next meeting.
- D. Study Halls at GHS** – Chairperson Clancy reported that Joel Favazza had requested that this matter be put on the agenda to discuss why there are no study halls at GHS anymore. Mr. Cook reported that study halls that are not directed by a teacher do not count towards the 990 hours required for structured learning time, which was part of the decision to eliminate study halls. He noted that there was an attempt to implement directed study

halls, but they were more supervised than directed and were supposed to be used to help students who were going from a College Prep level to an Honors level or an Honors level to an AP level. However, in practice, the study halls were used for students who were failing a class and were a discipline problem. Mr. Cook also noted that the teacher duty for study hall was negotiated out of the GTA contract.

Mr. Cook reported that in lieu of bringing study halls back, there is an extended homeroom period every three days where students are able to complete work. He noted that those periods are also used for student assemblies, class meetings, senior pictures, freshmen elections, and senior meetings with guidance counselors, without having to take students out of class.

Dr. Safier reported that state law indicates that non-directed study halls do not count toward the minimum 990 hours of structured learning time. He indicated that the time on learning at the high school is now 999 hours and 44 minutes, and adding a study hall every day would deduct about 135 hours from that time on learning. He noted that if directed study halls are implemented, class sizes would go up or more teachers would need to be hired. Mr. Cook stated that rather than looking at directed study halls, they are doing things like an Academic Skills and Practice class and morphing the SAT prep class into a math intervention class.

- C. Mad Hot Ball Program/Consideration of Instructional Practice** – Dr. Safier indicated that he has no problem with the gender equity issue that was raised by Joel Favazza (i.e. girls leading dances) and indicated that he will ask Gregg Bach to discuss this matter with the elementary music teachers and Miss Tina.

III. ACTION – None.

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 October 10, 2019 at 5:52 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*