

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Program Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 3, 2010
Superintendent's Conference Room
9:00 a.m.

Members

Roger Garberg, Chairman
Val Gilman
Michelle Sweet

Administration Present

Interim Superintendent Dr. Joseph Connelly
Assistant Superintendent Shayne Trubisz
Ann-Marie Jordan

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Garberg called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

II. REPORTS AND DELIBERATIONS

- A. BSRI Implementation at Veterans Memorial School – Crisis Intervention Update
Dr. Connelly stated that Ed Moskovich approached him with a plan to phase in the Bay State Reading Institute program at Veterans School. Dr. Trubisz believes this program will help build and sustain capacity at Veterans over four years. She stated that data meetings have started and that every child who is struggling or is at some risk will be followed.

Dr. Trubisz stated that the cost of the program would be \$133,000 over four years. She reviewed the funding process for the program, which includes \$25,000 from local funds, \$5,000 from current grants, \$15,000 from BSRI (paid back over two years through the current literacy grant), \$1,000 from Veterans, and a \$14,400 deferred payment with Pearson Company. Dr. Trubisz was hoping to use Race to the Top funds; however, those funds are to be used for professional development from Race to the Top providers. She stated that the DOE will try to broaden the professional development providers that will be allowed but that this will not happen until the spring grant for next fall, which she feels would be perfect timing. There was a discussion about using substitute coverage in order to train teachers to use the BSRI support appropriately.

Dr. Connelly reported on how he came up with the \$25,000 in the main office contingency fund and stated his belief that getting this program running is the best use of those funds. He also commented on the huge progress that has been made at Veterans in the last two months.

Dr. Trubisz recommended reviewing with the new superintendent where the district is, in light of its reputation as a failing district. There was a discussion about how Veterans got to where it is today (inconsistencies between teachers, poor leadership, etc.)

A discussion was held on how the success of the Beachmont School in Revere can be used as a model for Gloucester. Mrs. Gilman stressed that she would like to prioritize funding this program for the other three elementary schools, as well. Dr. Trubisz stated that this program is not a magic bullet and that the same kind of work is happening at the other three schools without BSRI. Dr. Connelly suggested treating the program at Veterans as a pilot program and to plan on future adoptions at the other schools. He stated that we will not have the money starting in FY12 to maintain the support staff since over \$600,000 in mandated special ed costs that are funded outside of the budget are going away.

After discussion, upon a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: To recommend to the full School Committee to support the entire BSRI plan as presented, which includes the utilization of \$25,000 from the main office contingency fund in order to finance the BSRI support for Veterans Memorial School.

Dr. Trubisz presented the subcommittee with the “Goals & Initiatives Regarding Teaching & Learning 2010” and stated that she would like the incoming superintendent to see this document, as well.

B. Final Consideration of Bullying Policy and Plan

Ann-Marie Jordan reviewed the “Policy to Prevent Bullying” and the “Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan,” which the School Committee is required to adopt by the end of December and which the district must review every two years. In order to remove redundancy between the policy and the plan, Ms. Jordan recommended replacing all text in the policy from “Responsibilities” through “Information to Students” with a new paragraph 2.2 that she provided, entitled “Gloucester Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.” After discussion, the subcommittee agreed to the amendment to the policy. Ms. Jordan will make the revisions in time for the School Committee packets for next week.

Dr. Connelly stated that parents are very concerned about how they will be informed about the bullying prevention plan. Ms. Jordan named a variety of ways in which parents can be notified. Mrs. Gilman suggested putting the policy in the student handbook and having parents sign a document every year saying they have read it.

After discussion, upon a motion by Mrs. Sweet, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

VOTED: To recommend to the full School Committee to approve the Policy to Prevent Bullying, to be presented for the first reading at the School Committee meeting on December 8, 2010.

Dr. Connelly strongly recommended that the bullying plan be attached as a reference in the School Committee policy book so we can keep track of it.

The subcommittee reviewed the “Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan” and discussed the following:

- Mrs. Gilman suggested having each principal sign a document annually to indicate that they have satisfied all of the staff training requirements. A discussion was held about who should oversee the process. Dr. Connelly suggested that it be overseen by the superintendent’s office.
- There was a discussion about having an attendance sheet for annual staff training to make sure that everyone who works at the schools completes the training. Dr. Connelly stated that it would not be appropriate to put this in the plan. It is the principals’ responsibility to make sure it happens.
- A discussion was held on professional development for special ed teachers and who would be responsible for making sure that it takes place in light of the predicted litigation that is going to come from this policy.
- There was a discussion on the Coordinated Wraparound Services Team and the resource manual. Dr. Connelly stressed the importance of having the resource manual done by June 2011 for use in September. A discussion was held on adding a statement to the plan that the resource manual will be updated every other year. Dr. Connelly advised against committing to that in light of liability issues.
- There was a discussion on the use of the word “promptly” in paragraphs C and D on page 7. The subcommittee agreed to leave it as is because of the liability issue.
- A discussion was held on including a statement cautioning parents about mischaracterizing individual incidents of conflict as “bullying,” which may harm a child who has been mischaracterized as a bully. Ms. Jordan stated that it is a process of working with families to help them see what is and is not bullying. Dr. Connelly stated that this may discourage parents from reporting a concern.
- There was a discussion about adding the acronym “RIP” – repetitive, intentional, power-driven – to the policy to define bullying. Ms. Jordan indicated that the policy and the plan need to follow what the law states and cautioned against using more than one definition of the term “bullying.” She did state, however, that she uses the “RIP” acronym all the time when talking to people about bullying.

After discussion, the subcommittee agreed to make the following changes to the plan:

- Add the word “Samaritans” after the word “and” in the sixth line of paragraph A on page 3.
- Delete the middle paragraph of section D on page 4 indicating the programs that have been used in the past. Dr. Connelly suggested including the phrase “such as” in the next paragraph and listing the programs there. Add at the end of the paragraph, “These evidence-based programs define bullying as repeated, intentional and power-driven actions.”
- Remove Dr. Trubisz’s name from the last paragraph of section D on page 4 and use her title instead.
- Delete “a voicemail box” from the last line of the first paragraph of section A on page 5.
- Delete the phrase “in a timely manner” in paragraph 1 on page 5 and replace it with “as soon as possible.”
- Delete the question marks in paragraph 2 on page 6.
- Delete the phrase “the law requires that the school or district use” in paragraph E1 on page 7 and replace it with “the Gloucester School District will use.”

There was a discussion about presenting the policy and the plan at the next School Committee meeting. Mrs. Gilman suggested that the School Committee members take turns reading it and stop to take questions after each section.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: To recommend to the full School Committee to approve the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with the amended corrections, to be presented for the first reading in conjunction with the Policy to Prevent Bullying at the School Committee meeting on December 8, 2010.

Mrs. Gilman thanked Ms. Jordan for her hard work in putting together the anti-bullying policy and plan.

C. Strategy Development: Next Steps and Lessons Learned

There was a discussion about the status of the focus group summaries, the responses to the survey, and coding the answers to the open-ended questions in the survey. Mrs. Gilman suggested presenting the survey results and summary of the focus group sessions at the MCAS presentation on January 12, 2011.

A discussion was held on better promotion of the schools and using the K-12 Insight model to get more input from the community. Mrs. Gilman suggested coming back with two or three priorities that we have learned, making a couple of simple recommendations of things that we can do, and then waiting until the new superintendent comes in.

Chairman Garberg would like the Superintendent search team to ask the candidates about their past roles in strategic development. There was a discussion about whether the search committee knows what is going on in Gloucester and what Gloucester needs. Dr. Connelly suggested giving Mike Gilbert a question that we would like used during the first round of interviews. Beyond that, the process is in his hands. Dr. Connelly cautioned against contacting the members of the search team individually.

Mrs. Gilman suggested that all of the subcommittees come up with two or three questions to recommend to the full committee to ask the final five candidates in January. Dr. Connelly suggested asking Mr. Gilbert to share questions that he has with the subcommittees, which may trigger ideas. There was a discussion about publicizing the questions and the finalists knowing what the questions will be ahead of time if the interviews are televised. Dr. Connelly stated that he believes televised interviews will validate the process.

Chairman Garberg discussed the inadequacy of the superintendent search survey and his concern that the search team has not been provided with enough information. He believes it is important to have a superintendent who knows what a strategic development looks like and be able to put a project together that makes it work. A discussion was held on trusting the search team to ask the appropriate questions and the fact that full responsibility through the first phase of the process was turned over to MASC. Dr. Connelly stated that the search team should get feedback from the focus groups and the survey and any other input the School Committee wants them to know about what they are looking for in a superintendent. He suggested that if Chairman Garberg is uncomfortable, he could call Mr. Gilbert and let him know that strategic planning is very important to Gloucester.

Mrs. Sweet left the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Mrs. Gilman would like to put on the December 8th School Committee meeting agenda that all of the subcommittees discuss the key questions that they need to ask based on the challenges that we face in the respective areas and submit them to her in order to avoid them becoming public. She will then put them in the form of behavioral-based questions.

III. DISCUSSION – None

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was

VOTED: 2 in favor, 0 opposed, to adjourn the Program Sub-Committee Meeting of December 3, 2010 at 11:55 a.m.

Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary