

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

5:30 PM

Superintendent's Conference Room

70 Waterford Street, Gardner, MA 01440

In Attendance: Mrs. Anne Hurst, Chair; Mrs. Jennifer Pelavin, Member; Mrs. Rachel Cormier, Member

Absent:

Also in Attendance: Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications, & Compliance Coordinator; Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mrs. Hurst called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Pelavin to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2022 Policy Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) recommends updates adding language "to include the expanded definition of race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length, and protective hairstyles, and the correlating legal reference to Acts of 2022, Chapter 117," to the following policies:

- AC – Non Discrimination including Harassment and Retaliation
- GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity
- GCF – Professional Staff Hiring
- JB –Equal Educational Opportunities
- JFBB-1 – School Choice
- JICA – Student Dress

A motion was made by Mrs. Pelavin and seconded by Mrs. Cormier to send these policies with the updated recommended changes to the October full School Committee Meeting for a first read. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy JIC – Student Discipline was reviewed and discussed. The MASC recommends updates to this policy to align with recently issued federal guidance pertaining to student discipline and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and a legal reference to Chapter 222, An Act Relative to Student Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School. Ms. West stated that the District has several policies related to discipline, each addressing specific topics and that it is possible that among all policies, this information may be addressed/covered. The Subcommittee requested that Ms. West review all policies related to student discipline and report

any recommended changes to those policies to align with the MASC recommended updates at the next Subcommittee meeting.

Policy JJF – Student Activity Accounts was reviewed and discussed. Mrs. Pelavin stated that a recent financial audit of the District student activity accounts found that this policy was not up to date regarding:

1. Approval of School Principals' designees to operate and control student activity accounts.
2. Use of standard receipt and disbursement forms.
3. Reimbursement to individuals.
4. Remediation of deficit accounts.

Mrs. Pelavin stated that in speaking with Mr. Hawke, Director of Finance and Operations, he recommended that the District replace current language in this policy with the MASC recommended language to address these items. Mrs. Pelavin presented the recommended changes to the Subcommittee, including recommended maximum balances for each account. A motion was made by Mrs. Pelavin and seconded by Mrs. Cormier to send Policy JJF with the updated recommended changes to the October full School Committee Meeting for a first read. The motion passed unanimously.

The next Policy Subcommittee meeting will occur on Thursday, October 20, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Pelavin to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.