

# **New Bedford School Committee**

**Policy Sub-Committee  
Paul Rodrigues Administration Building  
RM. 224**

**Thursday, September 29, 2011  
Meeting Minutes**

**1. Call to Order : Meeting began at 6:40 PM**

**2. Roll Call of Committee Members: Chair, Dr. John Fletcher, Jill Ussach, Dr. Larry Finnerty**

### **3. Old Business**

#### **3A. DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY**

Denise Gaudette presented the proposed District Wellness Policy.

A representative from the Department of Health, spoke on behalf of the policy and asked for approval and support, and continued creative ways to increase student wellness in school.

Motion made by Ms. Ussach to refer the policy to the full board. Seconded by Dr. Finnerty. All then voted in favor.

A student representative from the High School spoke to how the students have been working on improved nutrition at the High School, and about the requirements for physical education by state regulation.

It was pointed out in the philosophy that "This policy outlines the District's ongoing commitment to wellness, which research has shown to be essential for both student and staff productivity." She expressed concern about the number of Physical Education teachers in the district and the need to bus students within the district to provide Physical Education.

**3B. Recommendation to refer the Bullying Prevention Policy to the full body by Ms. Ussach, seconded by Dr. Finnerty. All then voted in favor.**

*Motion Made by Dr. Finnerty to take items 3E. and 4A. out of order, seconded by Ms. Ussach. Vote approved by all.*

#### **3E. PROPOSAL TO BAN/BLOCK CELL PHONE USE AT NBHS**

Mr. Kulak, Headmaster at NBHS, spoke to the difficulty of maintaining classroom focus and instruction as students are using cell phones and electronic devices during class.

Ms. Ussach said she was in agreement, that at NB Vocational School, they have banned cell phone use.

Question from Dr. Finnerty, "What does the word 'ban' mean?" Mr. Kulak stated that during the school day, students should not be able to use cell phones (from homeroom to dismissal). Dr. Finnerty clarified that it is banning the use of cellphones and electronic devices.

Ms. Ussach mentioned that she believes that you are not allowed to scramble cell phone usage. There was a question as to what they did at other area high schools.

Dr. Finnerty asked what steps needed to be taken. Mr. Kulak discussed that expectations would need to be sent home and communicated.

Motion made by Dr. Finnerty to table the issue and ask administration to investigate policies of other districts in Massachusetts, motion seconded by Ms. Ussach. All then voted in favor to table the issue.

#### 4A. COMPUTER USAGE POLICY.

Only an updated policy is being proposed, with some changes as required by new requirements regarding the title, Bullying Prevention Statute regarding Cyberbullying, and CIPA.

Motion by Ms. Ussach to refer the policy to the full-body for approval, seconded by Dr. Fletcher, then vote taken and approved by all.

#### 3C. EMPLOYEE BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

The recommendation from Dr. Francis is to review the Employee Bullying Prevention Policy and discuss it at a future meeting. Ms. Ussach will make the motion to table this policy at this time to allow for Mr. St. John from the NBEA to attend while discussing this policy further. Seconded by Dr. Finnerty, then vote approved by all.

#### 3D. DRESS CODE

Ms. Ussach discussed her concern that through a parent survey administered in the past, parents felt it was feasible to adopt a uniform dress code for students. It would be less expensive for families, students would feel better about themselves, it would allow for more uniformity and sense of fairness for students.

Dr. Finnerty expressed that adopting a dress code would emphasize a seriousness of purpose for students. He said that it was worth looking at.

Dr. Fletcher said that the School Councils and Parent Councils would need to get involved. He asked if Ms. Ussach would lead a committee to go into the schools and talk to parent groups about the issue during the school year.

Ms. Ussach spoke to the point that the students might have a sense of pride, but looking for direction from this sub-committee as to a dress code as opposed to a uniform.

Dr. Francis expressed concern regarding the cost to parents of an initial implementation. She can see that some families are so marginalized right now that it may be cost-prohibitive in the first year.

Dr. Fletcher made a motion for Ms. Ussach to speak with parent groups further on the issue of a dress code, seconded by Ms. Ussach, and voted and approved by all.

*Dr. Finnerty took the position of chair.*

4B. "PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG"

Motion presented by Dr. John Fletcher and Attorney Thomas Clark regarding this issue. Dr. Fletcher said we did not have this policy in place. Dr. Francis asked for a name to the policy.

Dr. Finnerty suggested we add ..."cannot be disciplined *or singled out*" to the language. Ms. Ussach made a motion to bring this policy to the whole committee with the addition of "or singled out". Dr. Fletcher seconded, and all voted to approve this vote.

Another discussion regarded when to display the flag at half-mast, and policy in the future may be discussed on this issue.

4C. Dr. Francis brought a district policy GCD – PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING POLICY- to the attention of the sub-committee that this policy needed to be updated. Dr. Finnerty made a motion to review this policy. Ms. Ussach seconded. All voted in favor.

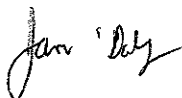
4D. CHILDREN OF MILITARY-CONNECTED FAMILIES

Dr. Francis brought information and guidance regarding *Military-Connected Students and Public School Attendance Policies* to produce this information to the committee and to discuss further at the next meeting. Dr. Finnerty voted to discuss it at the next meeting, and Ms. Ussach seconded the motion. All voted to approve.

**Dr. Finnerty made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Ussach seconded that motion, and all voted in favor to adjourn.**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted:



Jane Daly

Assistant Superintendent of Accountability and School Improvement