

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH
LEGAL DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: JANUARY 7, 2016
TO: PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: POLICY COMMITTEE
RE: JANUARY 7, 2016 MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Leslie Stevens, Ann Walker, Steve Zadavec and Kathleen Dwyer

Members Absent:

Policies Considered:

Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students (JBAB)

After the last Policy Committee meeting the draft of this policy was forwarded to Chuck Rhoades, Instructor of Health & Relationships courses at Portsmouth High School for his review and comments. Dr. Rhoades, along with 12 students and two staff members, met to review the policy and provided the Committee with written comments.

The comments concerned the way names are included on class rosters as some staff use the legal name to address transgendered students. The draft of the policy adequately addresses this issue. Steve will follow up with IT to see if there is a way to provide teachers with class lists using the name identified by the student.

The comments also addressed the use of restrooms, in particular, problems transgender students identified using group restrooms. Kathleen explained that the law prohibits requiring transgender students to utilize individual restrooms, but does allow it as a choice. There was a discussion about the availability of both types of restrooms at the High School and it appears that the restroom choices are sufficient. The Committee reviewed the language in the policy that provides a choice by the student so no change is needed to the draft.

There were two areas that the review group identified as areas of need. The first is staff development in understanding the experience of transgender and gender non-conforming students, and the second is the inclusion in the general curriculum of the transgender and gender non-conforming experience. On the issue of staff

development, Steve explained that all of the buildings have been working on new handbooks. As part of that process, and at the beginning of each school year, the Committee recommended that certain policies be reviewed at each building level when the handbook is discussed. Included would be a review of the Harassment and Bullying policies and others that might be identified.

The Committee felt that the inclusion in the health curriculum of the experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming was sufficient regarding curriculum. Leslie did ask that follow-up be done at the Middle School regarding this policy and the health and/or PE curriculum there.

Lastly, the students objected to certain classes having seating assigned by gender. The Committee made changes to the wording to the Gender-Segregated Activities section of the draft policy.

Food Service

Kathleen reported that the State had sent its comments back on proposed changes to the Food Service policy to Deb Riso. The State prefers the expanded version of this policy and Kathleen will have to meet with Deb Riso to determine how she wants to proceed.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 11, 2016 9:00 a.m. Central Office