

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH
LEGAL DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: FEBRUARY 11, 2016
TO: PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: POLICY COMMITTEE
RE: FEBRUARY 11, 2016 MEETING MINUTES

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

Policies Considered:

Wellness (JLCF)

Steve reported that he and Deb Riso had re-drafted the Wellness Policy taking into consideration the comments from the State of New Hampshire Department of Education and having reviewed the eighteen page guideline document from the DOE.

The Committee members began an initial review of the draft and Leslie indicated that, given the length of the document, members should take it home to read and review. Steve will check with Deb to see if there is a time sensitive element if it does not go to the full Board in March. If time is of the essence, the draft could go to first reading in March and the Committee could make any recommendations when it meets in late March. Kathleen reminded the Committee that, policies that pass first reading have legal effect. The Committee will review again at its March meeting.

Graduation Requirements (IKF)

Kathleen explained that a number of policies need to be updated since their last review in 2011 in order for the School Department to be eligible for the IDEA grant.

The Committee reviewed the graduation requirements and no changes are needed. It was recommended that the Board reaffirm this policy.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (JRA)

This policy protects the confidentiality of student records and the process that is required prior to disclosure. It is based upon Federal Law and the Committee recommended that the Board reaffirm this policy.

Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents (IFA)

This policy recognizes that there needs to be different methods of instruction for individual students. The Committee recommended that “specialized instruction” be added to the list of alternative learning programs.

Admission of Homeless Students (JFABD)

This policy is required by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to ensure that homeless students are not precluded from school attendance due to their living situations. Changes in the Federal since the adoption of the current policy require that a category of students lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence to include children living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings. The Committee recommended addition of this language to the policy and that it be revised and reapproved.

Child Find Policy (IHBAC)

This is a required policy that requires school districts to find students in need of special education. Changes in the law since the policy was last reviewed required a change of the age for transition of young students to School Department programming. Previously it was required to commence at the age of 2.5 and now between the ages of 27 and 29 months. There were a few minor language changes recommended as noted on the policy.

Programs for Pupils with Disabilities (IHBA)

This policy is required for the IDEA grant and insures compliance with the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Discussion Items:

Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Policy

Steve reported that there is an issue regarding students who attend underage drinking parties. It is often impossible to determine if a student has consumed alcohol or has remained at the party, even after knowing that there is underage consumption of alcohol. Students often admit to the police that they were aware that there was alcohol and then deny knowing about the alcohol when before the Disciplinary Committee considering consequences regarding extra-curricular activities. Principal Lyons has requested consideration of how to deal with student knowingly in the presence of alcohol. There is also the underlying issue of students who are not being truthful with the Disciplinary Committee.

The Committee agreed that this issue will need to be addressed before the beginning of the next school year so that any changes to the policy can be in the Student Handbooks. In addition, Principal Lyons will be invited to attend a Policy Committee meeting to discuss proposed changes.

Narcam

Steve reported that there had been some discussion with the school nurses and the Health Officer regarding potential training of students on the use of Narcam. The nurses do have it available at the High School. The concern is for students in living situations that have parent or sibling with significant drug involvement.

The Committee's reaction was that this would be very risky and beyond the scope of the School Department's responsibility. The Committee also had many questions about Narcam and its use. There was also concerns regarding creating an incorrect impression that having Narcam available would make drug use less dangerous. The Committee did agree that students living in at risk situations could be directed to community/health resources. The Committee agreed that the School Department could participate in roundtables that include the Portsmouth Regional Hospital.

Recommended Board Action on March 8, 2016:

Reaffirm:

IKF Graduation Requirements
JRA Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Revise and Reapprove:

IFA Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents
(include reference to specialized instruction)

JFABD Admission of Homeless Students
(include reference to children living in cars, parks, public spaces,
abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations
or similar settings)

IHBAC Child Find Policy

First Reading:

IHBA Programs for Pupils with Disabilities

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 23, 2016