



Weymouth

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Weymouth School Committee

Humanities Center

January 11, 2024

MEETING of THE WHOLE MINUTES

(approved 2/1/24)

Members In Attendance: Tracey Nardone, Chair; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw, Vice Chair; Mary-Ellen Devine, Secretary; Kathy Curran, Steven Buccigross;

Members Absent: Danielle Graziano, Mayor Hedlund

Also Present: Robert Wargo, Superintendent; Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Melanie Curtin, Assistant Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

To help with the discussion Superintendent Wargo passed out informational packets to school committee members with pertinent information on student discipline. Policies I and J, code of conduct handbook protocols as well as MGL Chapter 71-Section 37H, 37H1/2, 37H3/4 and Section 222 (student access to educational services during suspension) are contained in the packets.

It was pointed out that policy is different from procedure and that the handbook sign off form may not be widely understood. It was suggested that the information in the packets be posted and communicated to families on where to find the information.

After speaking with a colleague in Brockton, the Chair shared the idea of having a flip chart, similar to the emergency response plan for teachers and principals for actions and consequences. The example action of graffiti was used; the chart would give a minimum-maximum consequence with # of offenses. It was stated the chart is not to pigeon hole teachers and principals with consequence but to help parents/families. It was mentioned that consequences differ from school to school and principal to principal. It was noted that the handbook does state 'may lead to disciplinary consequences' and that there will be times with mitigating factors and where consequences are situational.

The Chair shared their opinion that parents need to be better informed and the communication needs to be better and clearer. Maybe a tab on the website regarding discipline/consequence.

Mr. Buccigross expressed his support of a flip chart or similar to help parents/families so that kids/students know that there are consequences and shared his opinion that not all parents/families read/understand all of the handbook.

It was communicated that discipline is progressive and that consequences will not be publicly shared regarding the incident that was talked about at the previous school committee meeting. Interventions and restorative practices were mentioned

The committee expressed the understanding of both sides, that middle school is a tough age and asked for immediate action being taken. Suggestions were made:

1. Expectations/Discipline/Consequences discussed at beginning of the year open houses (greatest event for parent attendance) for each grade level.
2. Holding parents accountable for child's actions
3. Be ProActive with all parents regarding handbook interpretation
4. Action/Consequence grid posted so parents/students know what possible consequences could be for actions
5. Detailed Action plan to reassure parents that their children are safe while in school as well as better/transparent communication
6. 'Parents On Duty' volunteer program-extra adults in the building, in hallways, the cafeteria, outside bathrooms. Confidentiality, CORI, as well as training were stressed to be done immediately
7. Increased communication home to families of disruptive students

The Superintendent shared that a pilot volunteer program will be starting for volunteers to be outside in the transportation loop during drop off and pick up in the mornings and afternoon. The committee urged for the program to be inside the building as well, especially in the cafeteria and hallways. Labeling bathrooms 'safe' bathrooms was also suggested. The Superintendent reiterated that staff and student safety is paramount.

Discipline and bullying was discussed. There are clear levels and definitions for bullying and investigations of claims may take 2-3 days. In school suspensions were talked through. It was shared that some in school suspensions are as a result of chronic absenteeism and cutting class. An opinion was shared that students should lose the privilege of being in the classroom by their disruptive behavior. Restorative practice and progressive discipline was repeated.

Mrs. Curran expressed her concern for the horrible incident which took place and reminded that the school committee evaluates the Superintendent and handling of the outcome and stressed the importance of staff and student safety. She suggested/inquired:

1. The Superintendent to have an office at Chapman and begin each day in the building
2. A plan for a long term solution

3. More social workers, school adjustment counselors, and mental health professionals
4. Better utilization of Chard St/Adams Academy pathways for disruptive students, not just school forward students.
5. Alternative learning settings-attending School Online, night school or tutoring for disengaged, disruptive students
6. To whittle down the choices of professional development for staff; that there could be too many offerings

It was clarified that Adams Academy students will be at Adams when JECC moves over. Assistant Superintendent Curtin outlined the current programming at Chard St. and Adams Academy. Concerns by a few members remained after the explanation as the understanding was that the program was temporary/a pilot and disruptive students would not be in the same building as pre-schoolers. Members were invited to observe the Adams Academy.

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that there's been an increase of 20% since 2015/16 for teaching and learning and staffing of BCBA's, ABA's, adjustment counselors is double. It was also shared that cameras are in use in Chapman and WHS however are not monitored in real time. Reliance of security ESPs is heavy. There's been an open position at Chapman for a security ESP.

Restorative practices, developing and building strong relationships, interventions (Tier 2), PBIS, as well as accountability and reparations was talked about. Again student safety and appropriate consequences were emphasized. The use of students using cellphones and recording in school repercussions was also mentioned. Small student group tiered support is happening with a school adjustment counselor, usually during elective periods.

Safety on buses was discussed. There are 3 digital cameras on each bus and drivers have a button to mark time if/when there is an incident on the bus. Signs are posted on the bus advise of cameras and recording. First Student works with Transportation Director Howard who in turn works with Principals. Requesting to add a monitor to bus routes was discussed. Requests may be made through the Principal to transportation. The Superintendent will add bus safety to his monthly update to the committee.

Bathroom safety at Chapman was conferred about. It was stressed that students shouldn't rely on going to the nurses to use the bathroom to feel safe. Using bathrooms during certain times of day, certain locations, having designated monitored bathrooms (providing students with a map), and an epass program was debated.

Associate Principals will now have their office in each of the wings. A request was made to have an administration staffing grid for all grade levels. Having a district Dean of Discipline was mentioned.

Saturday detentions, community service, loss of classroom privileges as consequences were suggested. The committee requested a written plan and timeline from the Superintendent and for

it also to be communicated out. Safety will be added as a permanent agenda item at school committee meetings.

The Chair advised that families and community members may email her or the committee at any time and encouraged parents/guardians to volunteer. The Superintendent recommended that families reach out to him as well

The Meeting adjourned at 6:35pm on the motion of Mrs. Curran, seconded by Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary-Ellen Devine
Secretary