

Policy Sub-committee Meeting 12\_10\_14

Present: Charles Flynn, Kristen Sparhawk, Arthur Batacchi, Maria Rundle (arrived at 6:15), H. Dennis Sears

Administration: Tom Simon, David Hastings

The meeting was called to order at 6:05

### **Reorganization**

Mr. Flynn was the only nominee for chair. He was so voted by all present.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved with Mr. Sears abstaining since he was not yet on the sub-committee at that time.

The next item on the agenda was deferred in order to give Ms. Rundle time to arrive.

### **Suggested Policy Revisions by MASC**

**DJE** - Mr. Flynn asked that Mr. Turner review bidding requirements and the proposed policy DJE and bring any suggestions forward to the next meeting in January in order to move it forward.

**ADDA** - Ms. Sparhawk expressed concern that it was possible to overapply the background check law as she had witnessed in her work with Flying Cloud Institute and Berkshire Hills Regional School District. The policy of that district had to her knowledge grown so strict that fingerprinting was necessary for all volunteers and even those who do not have unsupervised contact with children. She advised that such a strict policy of having all volunteers have to get fingerprinted and have background checks at their own expense was going to cause less community engagement with the school. Mr. Simon expressed agreement that this would adversely affect the number of volunteers the school could get.

Mr. Flynn suggested that the district make certain its policy sticks only to the letter of the law and no more.

Mr. Hastings said that the current practice was to still do CORIs for all volunteers, and just do fingerprinting for those that might accompany children on overnight trips or otherwise have unsupervised access to children.

**GCCD** - Domestic Violence Leave Policy. Mr. Flynn asked that Mr. Hastings review it to be taken forward at the next policy meeting. Mr. Sears stated that as this was a matter that could affect negotiations it should be looked at quickly.

Ms. Rundle arrived at 6:15

**JIC, JII, JK** – Student Discipline Policy, Student Complaints and Grievances and Student Conduct. Mr. Flynn asked that the committee take more time to review the MASC proposed policies and see if we should consider replacing our current policies.

**Monterey Early Childhood Initiative**

Ms. Rundle brought a draft policy JEB in which she inserted one paragraph to the existing policy. This paragraph would state that the entrance age for Monterey Kindergarten program would be earlier than the rest of the district. Furthermore she altered the rest of the policy to rename Early Kindergarten as K1 and the present Kindergarten as K2 as has been done by the Boston public schools. This proposed change might affect the ability of the district to get reimbursement for the youngest Kindergarteners.

Mr. Flynn inquired if this would indeed be a legal change and would it actually result in our getting more funding. He asked the administration to get a definitive answer.

Mr. Simon expressed concern that that the “K1” name would be confusing since South Egremont and Monterey current run Kindergarten/first grade programs commonly known as “K/1” He said he would look into the options for what we might legally rename it that might be less confusing for parents.

Mr. Flynn suggested that Ms. Rundle sit down with Mr. Simon and Ms. Hubbard to get the exact wording decided for another draft. They should also decide who should have the decision on whether or not to take in choice students from districts who would not fund the students on account of their age. They should bring back another draft in January.

**Planning Initiatives for the upcoming year:**

Mr. Flynn asked Mr. Hastings if there were any issues he saw coming up for policy. Mr. Hastings did not name any.

Mr. Sears thought the committee needed to look into the proscribed role for the town representative in the negotiations process. From information he got at the MASC conference he believes our practice may not be in keeping with the law. Mr. Flynn agreed to make this an agenda item in the future.

Mr. Hastings said that Ms. Higgins looked at the MGL on the matter of how the town representative would be chosen. He had convened a meeting of the 5 town select boards so that they might pick a delegate.

Mr. Flynn suggested that it was time for the policy sub-committee to re-commence its review of all policies. For next time they would review sections E and F.

Mr. Flynn noted that the MASC continues to inquire of Linda if the district would like to have them manage their policies online. Ms. Sparhawk and Mr. Flynn expressed doubt in the worth of this service and concern that the MASC had not shown itself very thorough when the district last put the policy overhaul in their hands to manage.

The committee also realized that it had failed to re-write policy regarding the school committee self-evaluations as it had promised to do. This too must be taken up at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45.