

MINUTES

SAU 39 POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021

BRICK SCHOOL, SUPERINTENDENTS OFFICE

PRESENT: SCSD Board Members: Steve Coughlan (Minute Taker), John Glover; ASD Board Members: Beth Kuzsma (Chair), Josh Conklin; MVSD Board Members: Sarah Lawrence; Administrative Assistant Abby Wallace; Superintendent: Adam Steel.

Chair Beth Kuzsma – Call to order at 9:06 AM.

Approval of Minutes: Steve Coughlan moved to approved the amended 7/20/21 minutes, John Glover seconded, unanimous. John Glover moved to approve the 7/27/21 minutes, Steve Coughlan seconded, approved 4-0, Josh Conklin abstained.

Policy EBCG, Communicable & Infectious Diseases: Atty. Dean Eggert has reviewed this, and recommends that if EBCG is adopted then GBGAA (HIV/AIDS POLICY) be rescinded, and JLCG (Exclusion of Students from School for Illness) also be adopted. Atty. Eggert also provided his recommended wording for JLCG. Final draft based on the discussions at the last meeting was not yet ready. These policies will need to be held for later attention at the SAU and individual boards.

A brief discussion was held around another policy question that will be brought to the SAU Board at the next meeting. SAU Board input will be solicited regarding a policy that would address board members working as substitutes in either their own district or another district in the SAU. Together with the EBCG/JLCG, this will have to be done trailing behind the bulk Policy Committee recommendations started through the SAU/District processes at the next SAU meeting.

Policy BIB, School Board Member Development Opportunities: John Glover recommends rescinding in MVSD. BIBA exists in all districts and covers the desired intention. Consensus of the committee supports retaining BIBA, and rescinding BIB in MVSD. Motion to adopt recommendation made by Josh Conklin, seconded by Sarah Lawrence, unanimous.

Policy KEE, Website Accessibility and Grievances: Steve Coughlan's recommendation to not adopt because it's too hard to do remains, and IT has not provided an opinion. IT remains a recommended, not required, policy. Any applicable laws still will apply. John Glover made the motion to do nothing with KEE, Josh Conklin seconded, unanimous.

Policy KFA, Public Conduct on School Property: Adam Steel asked for this to be amended due to an individual harassing staff through email. The existing policy did not allow for the digital equivalent of issuing a "no trespass" order, so he would like electronic communications to be added as a channel that can be controlled equivalently to physical situations. Motion to have Steve Coughlan amend the policy and recommend the amendment to the SAU and districts made by Sarah Lawrence, seconded by John Glover, unanimous.

Policy BEDH, Public Participation at School Board Meetings: Beth Kuzsma made agreed edit to have speakers identify themselves by name and town of residence. Board chairs retain the discretion to limit non-residents, and this provided them with the knowledge of where potential speakers reside.

Question about “first come, first serve” superseding prioritization of residents over non-residents was resolved by adding a phrase “with priority being given to residents of the District.” Motion to recommend amended policy to SAU and Districts made by John Glover, seconded by Josh Conklin, unanimous.

Policy BGF, Suspension of Policies: The model updates the existing policies, requiring a unanimous vote for an unwarned action. Motion to recommend adoption of the model policy for all 4 boards made by Sarah Lawrence, seconded by Josh Conklin, unanimous.

Policies BCA, School Board Member Code of Ethics, and B (Mont Vernon Only), Policy on Public Statements: BCA was deferred because it is unenforceable. The discussion focused on its aspirational nature, and how it held up a standard for board members and the public to judge the actions of board members. John Glover's revisions (for clarity and to make the language aspirational) were reviewed. John's draft doesn't cover B's concerns as is, and B also restricts statements by staff as well as board members. Point 9 was amended to prevent individual board members from speaking for the board. Beth Kuzsma also noted that the current draft does not include language from the current policy (point #11) about having the whole board support decisions of the board, whether they voted for or against a decision. John Glover noted it's not in the NHSBA model. Adam Steel suggested that Board members are entitled to their own opinions and the free speech, and the committee agreed it shouldn't carry forward. A discussion over the meaning of the phrase “expressions of public reactions to the board's actions” led to the conclusion that board members should share with each other and the Superintendent feedback they receive from the public, but in as concrete a manner as possible, not just “I've heard” or “People are saying.” Also, the best response to such communications frequently is the ask members of the public to communicate their concerns directly to administrators or the entire board (proper channels). The draft requests the board find a systematic way for board-staff communications, while another policy requires that all staff-board communications occur through the Superintendent. Motion to recommend the amended language for BCA be approved for the SAU and Districts, and rescind B in Mont Vernon, made by Sarah Lawrence, seconded by Steve Coughlan, unanimous.

Policy GDEBD, Employee Use of Social Media: This draft was proposed by Laura Taylor to address several concerns, including the current requirement that students who wish to participate in athletics and other activities are essentially required to have a cell phone and disclose their personal cell numbers, and one-to-one communications between students and adults cannot be monitored or observed. Adam Steel stated that he has mixed thoughts about this issue, because current texting provides an unalterable record of what was actually said by both parties. But there are other social media that should not be used, such as Snapchat. The idea of no communication without at least parental awareness and consent initially was raised. Adam advocated for transparency and required consent by parents for electronic communications, but also believes there is no place for social media communications. Communications through the parent's cell phone in instances where the child doesn't have a cell phone is an option. There was some discussion about children reaching out for assistance to a trusted adult about difficult home situations, and Adam was confident there are mechanisms for providing supports without resorting to one-on-one electronic communication. Sarah Lawrence thought that the proposed draft was as much procedure as policy, and thought the NHSBA Model, while a little outdated, provided a good policy framework. John Glover made the point that he policy should apply to

all staff, certified and non-certified, and the title should reflect that. Adam Steel pointed out that age of consent in NH is 16, unless one party is in a position of authority over another, in which case the age of consent is 18. Adam Steel also suggested that the policy should direct the Superintendent to establish procedure for communications not outlined in the policy, to provide some future-proofing. Sarah Lawrence will work on amending the draft taking into account the discussion in the committee.

Policy BDC, Elected and Appointed Officials: Several edits are necessary to reflect the current officials in the SAU and Souhegan. Steve Coughlan will edit the draft to reflect the corrections noted in the Trello card comments.

Chair Beth Kuzsma outlined the motions to be made to conclude the work of the committee this Policy Season. Policies that were unanimously recommended will be confirmed. Any policy where a committee member dissented will be voted on separately so the individual dissent will be noted. Policies that apply only to the Districts but not the SAU are contained in a separate motion. Model policies that the committee considered but decided don't need to be adopted are not going to be included in any motion, since no further action was the action already decided on. Policies that are to be recommended for rescission were already voted on and are captured in a separate Trello column already.

Motion to recommend moving the final drafts of the following policies to the SAU Board for review and moving to all boards for final review and approval after that: BBAB/BDB, BA/BA-R, BAAA, BBA, BBAA, BBBA, BBBC, BBBH, BCB, BDA, BDC, BDD, BDE, BDF, BDG, BEA, BEB, BEC, BEDA, BEDB, BEDC, BEDDA, BEDG, BFE, BGAA, BGD, BHC, BHE, BIA, BIE, BK, DFA, DID, EB, EHAC, GBCD, GBCF, GBEA, GBEB, GBK, GBEBE, GCR, KCD, KH, and KICL made by Josh Conklin, seconded by John Glover, unanimous.

Motion to recommend moving the final draft of EBB to the SAU Board for review and then moving to all boards for final review and approval, made by John Glover, seconded by Josh Conklin, unanimous.

Motion to recommend moving the final drafts of the following policies to the SAU Board for review and them moving to all school boards for final review and approval: JCA, JFAB, JI, JIC, JICD, JLCF, JLCH, and JLCJ, made by Steve Coughlan, seconded by Sarah Lawrence, unanimous.

Motion to recommend moving the final drafts of the following policies the SAU Board for review and then moving to all boards for final review and approval: BEDH, BGF, BCA, and KFA, made by Steve Coughlan, seconded by Sarah Lawrence, unanimous (John Glover voted using Jazz Hands).

Next Meeting to consider any policies that are sent back to the Policy Committee at the 8/19/21 SAU Board Meeting, as well as any policies considered to be urgently needed for the school year, is scheduled for August 24, 2021, 9AM-Noon, at the Brick School.

Meeting adjourned by Chair Kuzsma at 10:50AM.