

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS RULES MEETING

Monday, March 25, 2013

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Athletic Rules Subcommittee was held on Monday, March 25, 2013 at 5:00 pm in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at the NAGE Building. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, and Mr. David McCarthy, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent Richard DeCristofaro, Assistant Superintendent Colleen Roberts, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Mr. James Rendle, Mr. Frank Santoro, Mr. Robert Shaw; Ms. Allison Cox, President, Quincy Education Association; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mr. McCarthy called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and reviewed the establishment of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee, based on discussed at the October 24, 2012 School Committee. Dr. DeCristofaro reviewed two possible Athletic Director job descriptions: one would be replacing the existing citywide Athletic Director and the other would be establishing a part-time position at each high school for two Athletic Directors who could hold this position this in conjunction with another teaching or administrative position. Mrs. Lebo suggested edits for the purpose statement and asked for clarification how the positions would work with the middle schools. Mrs. Hubley asked if there is required MIAA training that should be added to qualifications. Mr. Rendle said that new Athletic Directors are required to take a course within a year of hire to receive and/or maintain MIAA certification.

Ms. Isola asked about the pros and cons of each choice. Mr. Rendle said that having two Athletic Directors would be a benefit to each high school in terms of accessibility for the coaches, administrators, and athletes. Collaboration would be necessary between the two Athletic Directors in terms of scheduling and facilities for games and practicing. Ms. Isola asked if having one director with an office at both buildings could work. Mr. Rendle said that there are records and other information that would have to be in both locations. Mrs. Mahoney asked if the new Student Information System would be utilized in scheduling and other functions. Mr. Rendle said that game scheduling is not computerized currently; the MIAA has been developing scheduling software, but the first release was problematic and they are working on a new release. Mr. Santoro said that the single Athletic Director is pulled in too many directions, managing transportation and scheduling and coaching for both schools. Having a dedicated person would allow the Athletic Director to focus on recruiting new students to athletics, and help to resolve issues with the students, parents, and coaches.

Mrs. Lebo sees value in having an Athletic Director in each high school, but feels that dedicated administrative support in each building is also important. Mrs. Lebo asked about the pattern of MIAA meetings; Mr. Rendle said they were usually in the morning and hearings or appeals are usually in the afternoon. Mayor Koch agreed that having an Athletic Director in each building is important and also echoed Mrs. Lebo's concern about administrative support. Mr. Shaw agreed that accessibility is a key issue, having an Athletic Director focused on each school would be very helpful. Mr. Shaw expressed concern about balancing the demands of being a classroom teacher and an Athletic Director; it is difficult to anticipate when issues might arise. Mrs. Mahoney asked what the ideal situation would be; Dr. DeCristofaro said it would depend on who applies for the job. He sees possibilities for the Athletic Directors to be academic teachers or support staff members or someone from outside QPS interested in part-time work.

Mayor Koch asked Dr. DeCristofaro about his preference. Dr. DeCristofaro said that he supports creating the two positions at each high school; these would help with a number of issues including scheduling, parent contact, recruiting new students to athletics, concussion awareness, eligibility, updating the website, and having a presence on Twitter and Facebook. Mrs. Mahoney asked about the budget for these positions and Dr. DeCristofaro explained that the current Athletic Director salary could cover salaries for the half-time teacher that would be hired to teach the rest of the course load, the Athletic Director stipends, and potentially administrative support. Dr. DeCristofaro noted that negotiations will need to be initiated with the QEA about the stipend.

Mr. McCarthy asked if the Subcommittee is in agreement that once the job description is revised and reviewed, the positions could be posted. Dr. DeCristofaro asked if this review could be done via email so as not to delay the posting. The Subcommittee agreed and Mrs. Lebo asked that the Subcommittee be kept updated as the responses to the job postings are received. Ms. Isola requested that budget numbers be shared as they are available.

The next item on the agenda was Academic Eligibility. By School Committee policy, student athletes must have passing grades in all core academic subjects, but this could mean a student has four D's and is still eligible to play. Dr. DeCristofaro suggested researching other cities and towns to see what they require for student athletes. Mr. Santoro noted that eligibility for clubs and athletics are the same, so if there changes, it will affect extracurricular eligibility in general. Ms. Isola suggested that since this is a School Committee Policy, the item should be moved to the Policy Subcommittee. Mrs. Lebo asked if there was a way to see how many of our students have 4 D's and are playing sports or participating in a club. Mr. McCarthy suggested we could create a probationary category where students are monitored and mentored. Mr. McCarthy is concerned about younger students having difficulty transitioning to high school and athletics is

sometimes what motivates students to stay in school. Ms. Isola agreed that our coaches are very important in encouraging students' academic achievements. Mr. Shaw said that in his experience, there are not many students that have four D's, more often students are succeeding in two or three classes and struggling in one class. Mr. Rendle agreed that this is very rare for Varsity athletes. Mr. Santoro reminded the Subcommittee that fall sports eligibility is based on final grades of the previous school year, so if any policy changes are made, efforts should be made to publicize the information.

Mrs. Lebo made a motion to move the issue of Extracurricular Eligibility to the Policy Subcommittee and Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

On the motion, Mrs. Lebo asked for data from neighboring cities and towns on their requirements for extracurricular eligibility. Mrs. Mahoney questioned whether Mr. Bregoli is eligible to participate in the discussion; Mrs. Hubley noted that this Policy change affects all activities, not just Athletics.

The last item on the agenda was Issues for MIAA Clarification. Mr. McCarthy reviewed the issues that were discussed at the October 24, 2013 School Committee about offseason contact, recruitment, and the "50% rule." For Offseason Contact, Mr. Rendle clarified that a coach can be present, but may not be on the field, take attendance, make the practice mandatory, or penalize players for not attending. Coaches and boosters may not provide funding, transportation, or equipment. For example, if a player can't afford to attend a summer camp, the coach or boosters may not pay the fee. At a summer camp, team members or candidates for teams must be less than 50% of the clinic's participants. Mrs. Mahoney asked for clarification about being a referee; a coach may not serve as a referee either. Mr. Rendle said that overall there are about 10 violations per year. 90% of the violations are inadvertent and addressed through reprimand; more serious consequences have occurred, including relieving coaches of their duty. Mr. Rendle feels that Quincy is on top of these issues because of the two high schools; the community is aware of the rules and watches for noncompliance. Mrs. Hubley asked if there are ways to assist students who can't afford summer camps; Mrs. Mahoney said sometimes there are scholarship opportunities at camps, but they are not often well-publicized.

Mayor Koch left the meeting at 6:15 pm.

For Offseason Contact, Ms. Isola asked for clarification about limits to family contacting a coach seeking information; Mr. Rendle clarified that there are not. Mr. Rendle said coaches who are contacted by parents are allowed to market their own program, but not in comparison to other schools, whether public or private. Mr. Rendle said that recruitment contact is strictly prohibited; a coach running a summer clinic must limit their comments to the clinic content.

Mr. Rendle said that each high school has an advertised contact with students at each middle school about football and soccer; the coaches ask for student contact information to follow up with additional information and paperwork. Mrs. Lebo noted that in the MIAA handbook, it is the Principals' responsibility to uphold these rules. Mr. Santoro agreed that Mr. Rendle is their guide, but he and Mr. Shaw often hear about problems after the fact and that they collaborate to ensure the rules are upheld.

For the "50% rule," Mr. Rendle clarified that the rule says at any off-season clinic, there must be under 50% of team candidates at any level (freshman, junior varsity, and varsity) present. For example, if there are ten students at a hockey clinic, no more than four players can be candidates for a high school's hockey team at any level and no more than two of those players can be on the ice together at any time. Mrs. Lebo asked if the coaches are polled about their outside activities. Mr. Rendle has an exit interview with each varsity coach at the end of their season and follows up as needed with the freshman and junior varsity coach.

For Recruitment, Mr. Rendle noted that parents are most often the unofficial agents, looking at the younger leagues and players who are soon to reach high school age. Mr. Santoro said that issues most often arise when unhappy varsity players want to switch high schools; the MIAA makes them wait a year. Dr. DeCristofaro said that we are asking the MIAA to make the decisions about waivers when transfers have been granted for other reasons. Mrs. Mahoney asked about how other cities and towns that have two high schools deal with this issue. Mr. Rendle said that Plymouth and Newton both have two Athletic Directors and they have a similar arrangement of allowing the MIAA to make the ruling for transfers between schools.

Mr. McCarthy closed the meeting by recapping that Dr. DeCristofaro will revise the Athletic Directors job description and send it out for review; Athletic Eligibility is now Extracurricular Eligibility and was moved to the Policy Subcommittee; and for now, the MIAA Issues discussion is closed, as the earlier questions have been answered. Mrs. Mahoney asked for an opinion on an issue raised by a parent whether the School Committee member who also coaches at the high school level should be present during a game against the other high school. Dr. DeCristofaro asked if the Subcommittee wanted Mr. Mulvey to pursue this with outside legal counsel and all Subcommittee members agreed this was the appropriate course of action.

Mrs. Lebo made a motion to adjourn the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Athletics Rules Meeting at 6:55 pm. Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.