

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

JOINT POLICY/TEACHING AND LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEES MEETING

Monday, May 20, 2013

A Joint meeting of the Policy and Teaching & Learning Subcommittees meeting was held on Monday, May 20, 2013 at 5:00 pm in the 2nd Floor Conference Room of the NAGE Building. Present were Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. Dave McCarthy, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Teaching and Learning Subcommittee Chair and Mr. Paul Bregoli, Policy Subcommittee Chair. Also attending were Superintendent Richard DeCristofaro, Assistant Superintendent Colleen Roberts, Mr. Michael Connor, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Ms. Kerry Ginty, Ms. Beth Hallett, Mrs. Ellen Hunter, Mrs. Meg McMillen, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Maura Papile, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Frank Santoro, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Robert Shaw, Ms. Judy Todd; Ms. Allison Cox, President of the Quincy Education Association; Ms. Jill Gichuhi, President of the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mr. Bregoli called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Dr. DeCristofaro introduced the first item on the agenda, a review of the Community Service pilot. Ms. Ginty reviewed the work done since the Community Service pilot was launched in September: creating a website, database of contacts (and establishing working relationships), and a calendar of service opportunities. Morning announcements were utilized, emails were sent to students and parents through NAVIANCE, coaches and advisors were contacted, social media utilized, along with classroom visits, assemblies, and a service fair at each high school. Mrs. McMillen talked about specific opportunities that the students have performed Community Service for including the Beechwood Knoll and Wollaston School Fall Festivals, the Walk for Hunger, Cleaner Greener, and Montclair's May Festival. As of today, 60% of North Quincy High School 10th and 11th grade students have completed and documented their 10 hours of Community Service or are in process; 53% of Quincy High School grades 10 and 11 students have done the same. Both Coordinators feel that there is a high level of awareness about the Community Service pilot and that students are working to meet the June 1 deadline for completion.

Dr. DeCristofaro asked the Coordinators to define the type of service that has been completed: within the schools or outside. Both coordinators said that many students volunteer with Quincy Asian Resources and the Thomas Crane Library. Ms. Ginty said there are a number of individual projects that students have initiated and that some students are finding their own opportunities. Mrs. McMillen noted that the English Language Learner population has embraced Community Service and are eager participants. Mr. Santoro said that there are many, many opportunities for the students based on Mrs. McMillen's and Ms. Ginty's hard work. He said that students seem to prefer doing their community service in groups. Mr. Shaw agreed that the communication to students has been excellent and students are aware of the many opportunities.

Dr. DeCristofaro asked for the Coordinators' thoughts moving forward. Mrs. McMillen feels that if students had been able begin their Community Service last summer, the completion rate might be higher; some students have work or family responsibilities during the school year and may have more time in the summer. Ms. Ginty thought that giving the parents more advance warning of the pilot might have helped as well.

Mrs. Lebo asked the Coordinators to speak honestly about how much work this has been for them. Ms. Ginty said it is manageable but the demands are constant during the day; it is not limited to after school hours. Mrs. Lebo asked about genuine service vs. created service opportunities; at an event like Cleaner Greener where there are many students present, are they all participating. Mrs. McMillen said that providing students with these created opportunities sometimes leads them to seek out their own opportunities. Ms. Ginty said that some students have continued to volunteer once their hours were completed. Ms. McMillen said for a number of students, they have been eager to go back to their elementary or middle schools to volunteer. Mrs. Mahoney said at the recent Montclair May Festival the PTO president noted they had many volunteers. She wondered whether there were students who have done their service but just not followed up with the documentation. Mrs. McMillen said that at after a recent event, she got a master list of volunteers from the organizers and then pursued the students for the paperwork. Mrs. Mahoney said that in the digital world of teenagers, maybe there is another way to document their time.

Mr. Bregoli asked if there were additional high school staff members helping with the process, such as Deans or Class Advisors. Ms. Ginty said that initially, these facilitators were to do the tracking of paperwork but it became easier to have one person tracking the paperwork. The class advisors and deans have helped in different ways, working with students on events and initiatives. Mr. Bregoli's concern is that this will task become unmanageable when additional grades are added to the pilot. Dr. DeCristofaro said that there are some tweaks needed, and his proposal is to continue to work with this student cohort and bring the pilot forward to grade 12 and retain it at grade 11. After an additional year, School Committee could consider adding Grades 9 and 10 and perhaps more staff.

Mr. McCarthy agreed that extending Community Service as a pilot program is the right choice. He said that the question is how to make it work for the majority of the students, knowing that there is a percentage of the population that will not be reached. Ms. Isola asked about the populations who are not complying with the requirement. Both coordinators agreed that it is across the board, a little bit of each type of student. Ms. Isola appreciates the efforts to publicize the Community Service concept; she expected more participation, so is surprised by the totals. She also suggested looking at alternate ways of submitting paperwork. Ms. Isola asked whether parents could be unaware of the requirement, but the information is on midterm reports and report cards and the principals send Instant Alerts. Ms. Isola asked what we know about other towns' levels of compliance for their Community Service requirements. Mrs. Lebo said that parent concerns will surface when the consequences for failing to complete Community Service are defined, such as not walking through

graduation. Mr. Santoro said there are a percentage of students who will not do this until the very last minute; other towns may provide a last-minute option for students to make up their hours.

Mr. Bregoli agreed that the pilot has not run for a full school year. Mrs. Lebo would like to continue with Community Service as a pilot. Mr. Bregoli said that it doesn't seem like the original plan of having deans or class advisors helping out has been beneficial. Mrs. Hubley suggested that since so much effort was put into startup this year, perhaps next year would be easier. Ms. Ginty said some things would be easier, but all of the organization event and contact information must be verified and updated every year. Mr. Bregoli asked if there was any time set aside on a weekly basis to meet with the deans or class advisors. Both coordinators said no; Mr. Shaw suggested that the requirements for class advisors and deans needs to be revised. Mrs. McMillen said that the deans and class advisor positions will be most helpful when the consequences are delineated. Mrs. Mahoney suggested that the midterm reports should say "F" for Failing, rather than "I" for "Incomplete". She feels that parents should be inundated with information, reinforcing the consequences of failing to complete this requirement.

Dr. DeCristofaro asked if the Grade 10-11 pilot cohort moves forward to Grades 11-12, does the Subcommittee agree that the graduation restriction should be imposed while this is still a pilot. This could be discussed at the upcoming School Committee meeting or the Community Service update presentation could be postponed to June 12 when the final numbers are available. Mrs. Lebo and Mr. McCarthy agreed that the update should be postponed until the June 12 School Committee meeting. Ms. Isola would like to know about the completion rate for five local communities that have Community Service as a graduation requirement and whether they grant waivers and if so, how many. Mrs. Lebo suggested asking about transition issues they would like to share; Ms. Isola suggested asking about how they track Community Service completion.

Mr. Keith Segalla presented the Technology Plan for 2013-2016 which will be submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in June; members of the Educational and Informational Technology Teams worked on the development of the plan. The DESE Office of Digital Learning provides districts with guidelines to help develop a long-range technology plan. Guidelines represent recommended conditions for effectively integrating technology into teaching and learning. Technology Plans must be approved by the DESE in order to be eligible for E-Rate discounts and federal and state technology grants. Each year, Quincy Public Schools reports on the progress made in implementing the plan. The guidelines, which were developed by the state's Educational Technology Advisory Council, are focused on six benchmarks: Clear Vision and Implementation Strategies; Technology Integration and Literacy; Technology Professional Development; Accessibility of Technology; Virtual Learning and Communications; and Safety, Security, and Data Retention.

Over the past three years, Quincy Public Schools has made significant progress implementing the current Technology Plan. These initiatives include: new email system, Microsoft Office upgrade,

redesigned website, ongoing upgrades of classroom computers, projectors, whiteboards, technology labs, professional development and training opportunities. Recent initiatives include wireless and guest networks, student technology survey, ongoing implementation of Aspen SIS, middle school technology initiatives for ebooks and iPads;;revision of Acceptable Use Policy; new BYOD. All of these efforts are a collaboration of the Mayor, School Committee, Leadership Team, Principals, Teachers, Partners, and Parent-Teacher Organizations.

Mr. Segalla then presented the Student Computer Survey results; individual students were asked about computers and internet access at home. Across QPS, 91% of students have computer access and 90% reported Internet access. (88% of QPS students completed the survey.) 66% of middle and high school students have a smartphone and/or a tablet device. The comparison to the survey data from 2010 shows a 10% increase in both categories.

The last item on the agenda was a presentation of a School Committee Policy update needed for sections 1.3 and 10.2 to add gender identity as a category for anti-discrimination to reflect Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011. Among the statutes amended is G.L.c.76, § 5, cited in the School Committee Policy sections. The statement appears on all Quincy Public Schools publications and stationary and in student handbooks. Mr. Mulvey recommended adopting the text of the new law and shared DESE's *Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment*.

Ms. Isola made a motion to incorporate the revised text as amended in Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011 into School Committee Policy. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion.

On the motion, Mr. McCarthy asked about the practical application of this law for students. Mr. Mulvey said that the law requires us to make accommodations, as for any accessibility issue. Mr. McCarthy suggested that a future Policy Subcommittee meeting focus on implementing this policy. Dr. DeCristofaro said that may not be necessary; situations will be handled within the law as they arise. Ms. Isola said that the DESE guidelines are comprehensive and that we should leave it up to the Superintendent, Principals, and Leadership Team to manage the implementation. Mrs. Mahoney agreed saying that we are recognizing the law through the Policy change and should trust in the staff to implement this in the same way as any other accessibility requirement.

On a voice vote, the ayes have it. The proposed Policy change will be reviewed at the May 22 School Committee meeting and voted on at the June 12 School Committee meeting.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 pm. Mrs. Mahoney seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.