

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH  
LEGAL DEPARTMENT  
MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:           JANUARY 25, 2017**

**TO:             PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD**

**FROM:          POLICY COMMITTEE**

**RE:             JANUARY 25, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

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**Members Present:** Leslie Stevens, Ann Walker, Steve Zdravec and Kathleen Dwyer

**Others Present:**   Paulette Rouse and Phil Davis

**Policies Considered:**

**Attendance (JH)**

Phil Davis was invited to the meeting to review the Protocol used by the Middle School in connection with enforcing the Attendance policy of the School Board. He indicated that the High School uses a similar protocol. He explained that the protocols were developed after a change in the CHINS statute that requires DCYF and DHHS review and prior approval of a CHINS action for truancy. The School needs to document a series of progressive interventions prior to contacting DCYF. The existing Board Policy needed more clarity for DCYF which led to the development of the protocol.

The Committee asked how many students have truancy issues. Phil said that the Middle School has between 2 and 4 a year that actually make it to court while there are probably in excess of 20 students with truancy problems that do not rise to that level. He also indicated that it crosses all socio-economic lines.

Both Kathleen and Phil shared that, even with bringing students to Court, there is very little effective action taken by the Court as placement is no longer an option under the law. Phil did say that, for some families, court action does get their attention. He also said that DCYF makes a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. DCYF does not factor excused absences in their determination to recommend going forward with a CHINS petition.

The Committee then reviewed the Board policy and recommended changing the excused absence definition to delete the reference to a parent calling in a student for illness. This change would allow greater discretion for the administration in evaluating

absences. Phil shared that the administration is generally aware of circumstances causing absences. He also recommended changes to the references to the tardy section of the policy to delete the references to start times to referring to a tardy being recorded after the start of the instructional day.

The Committee also recommended some other minor formatting changes to the policy and that the Board revise and reapprove this policy.

### **Graduation Requirements (IKF)**

The revisions to this policy had been considered by the School Board at its first meeting in January. Ann Mayer had sent a question about this policy to the Policy Committee concerning the economics requirement and RSA 189:11 (requires teaching and assessing New Hampshire and American history). The Committee checked the policy and it does include the economics requirement. Kathleen then passed out a copy of RSA 189:11 that does require the teaching and assessing of New Hampshire and United States history, but does not make it a graduation requirement. The statute does provide for the issue of a certificate by a school district. Steve indicated that current curriculum and testing on same satisfies the requirements of this statute. No further action was recommended on this policy.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (JRA)**

Kathleen explained that there is a required change to this policy changing the number of days that the School Department has to make records available after a request from 30 days to 14.

### **First Aid & Emergency Medical Care (EBBC)**

Kathleen explained that the nurses made some recommended changes to this policy and she will incorporate their suggestions and bring it back to the next meeting.

### **Non Policy Items Discussed:**

#### **School Resource Officer Memorandum of Understanding**

The Committee had briefly discussed this at a prior meeting and Steve followed up with a discussion with the Chief. The police are in support of going forward in working on an MOU now instead of waiting for a new chief. There are two prior drafts, neither of which were ever signed and Kathleen will review same and bring back suggestions. Steve said that after that process is finished he will arrange a meeting with the police and the High School and Middle School to hopefully come up with a document that can be signed.

Leslie indicated that she wants to be sure that any MOU clearly delineates lines of communication between the Police Department and the School Department in emergencies and certain types of arrests involving students. She also requested that the Committee be provided the document in advance of its consideration at a meeting so that there would be time to read it.

### **Concussion Protocol**

Ann asked Phil what the Middle School is doing in this area. Phil reported that there is a lot more attention to this issue and accommodations for students experiencing concussions. He also said that last year all seventh graders had been screened for baselines as part of an Impact Program. He had reached out to have this done again this year, but did not get a response back.

### **School Handbooks**

Paulette handed out copies of each school's current handbook.

### **Recommended Board Actions:**

#### **Revise and Reapprove: (single reading)**

Attendance (JH)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (JRA)

#### **Revise and Reapprove: (second reading)**

Graduation Requirements (IKF)

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 23, 2017 9:00 a.m.**