



**BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
PERSONNEL & POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
June 23, 2015**

PLACE: Swift River Elementary School Library

TIME: 6::00 pm

SUBCOMMITTEE: Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Chair (present); Ms. Dawn French, Member (present)

ADMINISTRATION: Karol G. Coffin, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services; Ms. Sandra Bremer, Cold Spring School Principal

VISITORS: Ms. Andrea Mastalerz

Minutes

I. Call Subcommittee Meeting to order

Ms. Bogdanovich called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. Acceptance of Minutes

A. June 8, 2015, Minutes

Motion: Ms. French moved to accept the June 8, 2015 minutes as presented.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote: 2,0,0

III. Public comment regarding items on the agenda

IV. Items for action

A. Kindergarten Age

Motion: Ms. French amended the original motion to table the discussion.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote 2,0,0

Motion: Ms. French moved to pass the request to the full School Committee with the recommendation of not accepting the student.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote: 2,0,0

Discussion: Ms. Bogdanovich introduced the item to consider the possibility of changing the Kindergarten policy to include a test for admittance of younger children. Ms. Bremer,

Cold Spring School Principal, and Ms. Andrea Mastalerz, head teacher, spoke to the question.

Ms. Mastalerz noted that she has taught for 24 years and things have changed immensely in that time. There is a lot expected of kindergarten students. She considers the social emotional aspect of kindergarten very important. For a new student full day kindergarten is a long day. Kindergarten is not just academics although there are academic expectations.

Ms. Bremer noted that the changed to full day kindergarten made a big difference. Research is being done on the subject. Ms. Bremer noted the “Ber babies” (September, October, November, December) study which shows that they underperform. Ms. Bremer also noted that there would be concerns regarding the number of slots available for student that are 5 years old, and are Belchertown residents. There is a cap for kindergarten students. There are currently 141 students for next year. The possibility of a wait list is conceivable.

Ms. Bogdanovich questioned what tools would be needed to assess whether a child is ready for kindergarten. Both Ms. Bremer and Ms. Mastalerz noted that more research would be needed to answer the question. Any testing that would be implemented would have to hold up if contested. Ms. Bremer noted that she remembers only 4 occasions in the past that the district was asked to waive the age limit, all 4 were denied. Ms. Mastalerz noted she feels it is better for the child to wait. Ms. Bogdanovich noted that social emotional development is very important. Every child is different and it could be a benefit or a disservice. Ms. Bogdanovich questions a “hard and fast” policy.

Ms. Bogdanovich is not ready to change the policy right now without further investigation.

Ms. French noted her qualms about changing the policy. The person the child is at kindergarten is not necessarily what you have at middle school. Life changes the individual. It was mentioned that a 30 day trial could be used but Ms. French noted she would not favor that as how would you tell a child after 30 days they can’t go to school anymore. Ms. French notes that the policy needs to be more definitive.

Superintendent Coffin noted that the policy change discussion would not be immediate. We should follow the current policy for the request from Ms. Bermudez. If we choose to change policy it should not be an emotional change.

Ms. French questioned the history of grade skipping. Ms. Bremer noted she does not remember any instance in this district. Ms. Bogdanovich noted that a tiered instruction model may change many things. Ms. French noted she would need more data before changing policy. Ms. Bogdanovich noted she would like more input from Ms. Bremer before any policy changes are made.

B. Out of Country Field Trips

Motion: Ms. French moved to table the Out of Country policy review.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote 2,0,0

Discussion: Superintendent Coffin presented the insurance policy. Under the school’s insurance policy students are only covered in the US and Canada. Staff would be covered

outside of the US. A rider could be purchased to cover students out of the country. Trip coverage does not get the student back to the US. More information is needed on the clause with regard to liability. Discussion included medical liability. Ms. French noted many concern with regard to the medical issues that may arise for a student that is out of the country. Ms. Bogdanovich noted that many of the "should" in the policy needs to be changed to "must".

V. Unfinished Business (awaiting MASC recommendations)

Motion: Ms. French moved to table Section V.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote 2,0,0

- A. Scholarship & Prizes
- B. Outside Organizations – Policy KCD-E-2
- C. Attendance Officer Job Description
- D. Attendance Monitoring/Accounting
- E. Paternity Leave Policy
- F. Inclusive Language Policy

VI. Subcommittee correspondence

- A. Agenda, June 23, 2015
- B. Minutes, June 8, 2015
- C. Current Entrance Age Policy – JEB
- D. Entrance Age Survey
- E. Current Field Trip Policy – IJOA and IJOA-R and IJOA-1
- F. Out of Country Field Trip Request – Cuba
- G. Liability Insurance Information

VII. Adjourn

Motion: Ms. French moved to adjourn at 6:57 pm

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

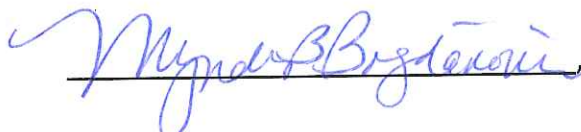
Vote: 2,0,0

Respectfully submitted by,

Ramona Griffin

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

 Myndi Bogdanovich, Chair

 Dawn French, Member

The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):

- Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.
- Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21st Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.
- Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown Personnel & Policy Subcommittee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools, at 413.323.0423 or via email at superintendent@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns.