

Minutes

Policy Subcommittee: January 30, 2018

Room 101, Phillips Administration Building, 30 Common Street, Watertown, MA 02472

Present: Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Chair; Lindsay Mosca, Amy Donohue, Members; Dede Galdston, Superintendent; Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations; Kathleen Desmarais, Director of Student Services; Shirley Lundberg, WHS Principal; Mike Lahiff, Director of Athletics; Bridget O'Brien; Peter Centola

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM.

Review of Policy KI: Visitors to School.

Change security requirements, #3, to:

For security purposes, it is required that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building, have a valid ID scanned and wear a badge issued by the office at all times while in the building.

File: KI

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee encourages parents and guardians to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school system's mission and goals.

Visits by parents to several classrooms in a given grade for the purposes of comparing teaching styles to provide a basis for a request for student assignment to a particular teacher are strongly discouraged because the School District's policy of assigning a student to a particular class is the sole responsibility of the building Principal in consultation with the staff of that school.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

- 1. Requests for classroom visits will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we require that such requests be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made. The visitor will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials that may be part of students' records from plain view. The visitor will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.*
- 2. ~~The building Principal has the authority to admit or deny admission to any visitor, as well as to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by all visitors.~~ The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.*
- 3. For security purposes it is required that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. All visitors must provide a photo identification upon arrival and wear a school-issued visitor's badge throughout the visit. All visitors must have the permission of the Principal.*

4. *Under ordinary circumstances classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.*

Cross ref.: Policy IHBA, Observations of Special Education Programs,

The same language shall be substituted for #3 in this Policy. Changes were also recommended by the Director of Student Services to bring current Policy in line with current State laws, and our District's department titles (Student Services rather than Special Education). In addition, language was added to safeguard the privacy of children of other parents who may be observed in a group classroom session with the observers' own child.

File: IHBA

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. *Parents' request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal.*
2. *The Student Services Director or designee shall contact the parent/guardian(s) for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents' request.*
3. *When a parent/guardian requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Student Services Director or designee will seek approval from the Director of Student Services and the building principal before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.*
4. *The Student Services Director or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).*
5. *The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.*
6. *If the observer is not the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must sign a release for the individual to observe.*
7. *The number of observers at any one time may be limited.*
8. *The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.*
9. *The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.*

10. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.

11. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. The observer will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent/guardian(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting. .

LEGAL REF.: MGL [71B:3](#)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

CROSS REF.: [KI](#), Visitors to Schools

SOURCE: MASC

ADOPTED: September 2009

NOTE: The following quotes from the DESE Advisory are important points of understanding to the implementation of this policy.

“School districts and parents have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent/guardian or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue.”

“The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect: the safety of children in the program during the observation; the integrity of the program during the observation; and children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.”

Vote to recommend was unanimous.

Review of Policy JMA: Awards for Championship Athletic Teams or Athletes.

After some discussion, the Director of Athletics noted that the MIAA defines which teams can be designated as State Champions, and which individual athletes can be designated as State Champions. Teams who win their Divisions are designated as State Champions. By MIAA rules, individuals who win their Divisions must then go on to compete and win against all other Division winners before they are

designated State Champions. WHS has one such individual State Champion, in Golf. She has her name on a banner in the gym. Individual winners in their Divisions are currently recognized by signs in the WHS corridors.

There is inconsistency in the way the issue of banners has been handled in the past: one team has all its member names listed, some numbers have been retired. There is currently no room in the gym for more banners. The Athletic Director stated that Winchester spent \$20,000 on new banners, which they cannot use because there is no room in their new gym.

It was unanimously voted to recommend the following addition to the current language in Policy JMA, which refers specifically to Championship Athletic Teams or Athletes:

File: JMA

AWARDS FOR CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETIC TEAMS OR ATHLETES

The team, which has won a league championship, or qualified for a sanctioned MIAA tournament will receive a picture plaque, upon recommendation of the Coordinator of Athletics.

The team, or individual athlete, who has won a division level championship, will receive an allocation of up to \$50.00 per student for the purchase of awards.

If the team or individual athlete goes on to win a state championship, the allocation will be increased to up to \$100.00 for the purchase of awards.

The team members, team coach, and Coordinator of Athletics will determine what they would like the award to be.

Any cost over and above the allocated amount will be borne by the Booster Club and/or students.

Awards may be presented to the team at a scheduled meeting of the Watertown School Committee.

*WHS should follow the rules of the MIAA in determining which athletes and teams qualify as State Champions. Plaques or signs in the WHS corridors can acknowledge other winners of Divisional or League titles.**

*Due to impending construction of a new high school facility, which may include re-design or rebuilding of the gymnasium, no purchases of new banners should be made until the new facility is open, in order to ensure that there is adequate space for future banners. The Athletic Director shall keep track of teams and individuals who qualify for these new banners while construction is not yet completed.

Vote to recommend was unanimous.

Review of need for Policy for Guest Protocol for Dances and Other Events.

WHS would like to create a procedure for advance approval of guests at dances and other social events. The subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend the following new policy:

Protocol for guests at school dances and other social events shall be determined by the Superintendent/Principal, and published in the Student Handbook.

Vote to recommend was unanimous.

Review of Policy KF: Building Use.

The discussion centered on creating a policy which allowed the administration to maintain consistency and clarity in assignment of spaces under its control (not playing fields, which are under the control of the Recreation Department), and to maintain the School Committee's desire for youth programs to be scheduled for earlier times in the day. Emails from concerned citizens were shared during the discussion.

The following policy was unanimously recommended to the School Committee for a vote:

File: KF

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

1. *The School Committee may conduct such educational and recreational activities in or upon school property under its control, and, subject to such regulations as it may establish, and, consistently and without interference with the use of the premises for school purposes, shall allow the use thereof by individuals and associations for such educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and like purposes as it deems for the interest of the community.*
 - a. *The affiliation of any such association with a religious organization shall not disqualify such association from being allowed such a use for such a purpose.*
 - b. *The use of such property as a place of assemblage for citizens to hear candidates for public office shall be considered a civic purpose within the meaning of this section.*
2. *The School Committee will approve rates for various classifications of eligible groups within the school district, which use school facilities during non-school hours. The school administration will establish procedures on school facility use and **establish a time before which youth activities will have priority whenever practicable.***
3. *Priority shall be given for the use of school facilities as follows:*
 - a) *Watertown School Department Sponsored and school-related activities*
 - b) *Other Town Department activities*
 - c) *Watertown non-profit ~~youth~~ organizations and community activities*
 - d) *Non-Watertown based non-profit ~~youth~~ organizations and community activities*
 - e) *For-profit organizations or commercial business*
4. *The use of controlled substances, such as but not limited to alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco, is prohibited on all Watertown Public School property.*

LEGAL REFS.: **M.G.L. 71:71: 71:71B**

ADOPTED: *October 8, 1974*
REVISED: *January 10, 1983*
REVISED: *December 10, 1990*
REVISED: *August 30, 1999*
REVISED: *January 5, 2004*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.