

NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Ashby – Pepperell – Townsend, Massachusetts

POLICY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, June 11, 2015
Educational Support Center

PRESENT

Chairperson	Randee Rusch	Member, At-Large
	Anne Adams	Member, Pepperell
	Susan Robbins	Member, Townsend
	Crystal Messamore	Member, Ashby
	Joan Landers	Superintendent of Schools
	Jeremy Hamond	IT Director

The meeting was called to order at 9:43 a.m.
Susan Robbins left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Anne Adams and seconded by Susan Robbins to approve the minutes of May 26, 2015. The April 13, 2015 minutes showed the Vote: Unanimously passes. Crystal Messamore had abstained from approval of minutes the vote.

A motion was made by Anne Adams and seconded by Crystal Messamore to approve the amended minutes.

Vote: Anne Adams yes; Crystal Messamore yes; Susan Robbins abstained.

OLD BUSINESS

- a) Policy GBEE Social Networking: The chair provided an updated version of the policy for the subcommittee to review. The Technology Director Jeremy Hamond shared his recommendations with the committee (attachment included).

A motion was made by Susan Robbins, seconded by Crystal Messamore to bring GBEE back to subcommittee for a final review.

Vote: Unanimously passes

- b) Policy IJOA Field Trips: The chair combined the two policies IJOA and IJOA-1 into one document and share with the subcommittee. The subcommittee had one recommended change in the last paragraph, first sentence remove “except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests”

A motion was made by Crystal Messamore, seconded by Anne Adams to bring amended policy IOJA to the full committee for 1st reading.

Vote: Unanimously passes

- c) Policy JJH Student Travel ~ The subcommittee recommend adding a sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph “Final approval will not be granted until all preparations for the trip according to the regulations in policy JJH-R have been completed.” In the Third paragraph, added

a seconded sentence “Privately organized trips are those trips that utilize a third party company for travel, itinerary, and accommodations for a predefined trip.”

A motion was made by Crystal Messamore, seconded by Anne Adams to bring JJH back to subcommittee for a final review.

Vote: Unanimously passes

- d) Policy JJH-R Student Travel Regulations ~ The subcommittee recommends removing in section two, third paragraph “and common sense.” In the fourth sentence, replace the word “stragglers” with the words “late arrivals.” Added a fifth paragraph that states, “If not all members of a class are participating in a trip, the school should provide appropriate educational substitute activities for any those students not participating.”

A motion was made by Crystal Messamore, seconded by Anne Adams to bring amended policy JJH-R to the full committee for 1st reading.

Vote: Unanimously passes

TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- e) Policy GCE Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies
- f) Policy GBEE Social Networking
- g) Policy JJH Student Travel

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Policy GCO Evaluation of Professional Staff
- b) Policy GCQD Resignation of Professional Staff Members
- c) Policy GCQE Retirement of Professional Staff Members
- d) Policy GCQF Suspension and Dismissal of Professional Staff Members
- e) Policy GDA Support Staff Positions
- f) Policy GDB Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans
- g) Policy GDD Support Staff Vacations and Holidays
- h) Policy GDO Evaluation of Support Staff
- i) Policy GDQC Retirement of Support Staff Members
- j) Policy GDQD Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members

TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- a) Policy KHB-E Advertising in the Schools (Contract Pricing)
- b) Admission Fees
- c) Policy GCBA-E Salary Ranges for Non-Represented Personnel
- d) Policy ADF School District Wellness Program
- e) Policy IGA Curriculum Development
- f) Policy IGD Curriculum Adoption
- g) Policy IL Evaluation of Instructional Programs

- h) Policy Out of State Tuition
- i) Policy JRD Student Photographs
- j) Policy IJOA-R

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday, June 18, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. at the Peter Fitzpatrick School

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Crystal Messamore, seconded by Anne Adams to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Vote: Unanimously passes

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Bilotta-Simeone, Recording Secretary

File: GBEE

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY FOR STAFF

1. General Concerns

The North Middlesex Regional School District recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between staff and students and their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one's professional life and personal life will be blurred. Our staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Should a staff member engage in any electronic communication with students, the school district is concerned, and the staff member should be concerned, that such activities have the potential to undermine the staff member's authority to maintain discipline and to remain truly objective with his/ her students.

In addition, any online communication using one's own personal resources, as opposed to school district resources, compromises the staff's, as well as the school district's, ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth's public records laws. The law requires public employees who send, receive or maintain records in their capacity as public employees, to retain, disclose and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law. This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication.

When staff members communicate through school-based resources, such as staff email, such records are retained and archived through the school's information technology department. If, however, a staff member communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained. The burden falls on the staff member to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and parents and guardians.

2. Acceptable Use Policy:

This policy is adopted in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the School District's Acceptable Use Policy, which governs the use of the school district's technological resources.

3. Expectations of Staff

With these concerns in mind, the NMRSD has instituted this "Social Networking Policy," and establishes its expectations for staff members' use of social networks such as Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, personal email accounts, text message features of cell phones, use of blogs, and other electronic or technologically based communication systems. **Note: Any school based social network available shall have preferred use in order for the retention of public records.**

- A. Establishing a Private Social Network Account:** Before endeavoring to establish any social networking account, staff members should familiarize themselves with the features of any account they choose to use. **Staff members are encouraged to deny private social network account access for any students, parents, and community members who are known only through their professional role in the district.** Staff members should:
- 1) Take specific steps to "privatize" the information placed online.
 - 2) Assume responsibility if any information deemed "private" becomes "public."
 - 3) Be aware of the fact that any information shared privately with an individual could be re-distributed without explicit consent.
 - 4) Understand that the same principles applied to face-to-face communication should be applied to an online conversation.
 - 5) Remember that nothing posted online is ever truly "private."
- B. Setting-Up a Professional and Personal Identity:** The school district expects staff members to maintain a clear separation between their professional and personal lives. NMRSD staff members are prohibited from using personal social networking accounts to communicate with parents ~~and/or~~ students. **Staff members who wish to utilize social networking tools for professional purposes should create separate professional social networking accounts for use with students, parents, and district community members.** Suggested Protocols:
- 1) **Requests for access to professional social network accounts must be approved by the staff member's direct supervisor, the director of technology, and the superintendent.**
 - 2) Notify the Director of Technology and the Building Principal that a professional site has been established for school use.
 - 3) **All professional social network accounts must be associated with the staff member's district provided email address.**
 - 4) Establish a professional social network identity that is separate from a "personal" identity.
 - 5) Use a professional social network identity and account exclusively for communication with students on matters directly related to education.
 - 6) **All professional social network accounts must be linked to the school and district administration accounts for access to read any and all general messages.**
 - 7) Remember that the "friends" associated with such an educational, social network account should only be members of the educational community, such as administrators, teachers, students, and parents of such students.
 - 8) Every account that enables "friends" shall have the official NMRSD page as a friend if one exists.
 - 9) Deny friend requests from individuals who do not fit into any of these categories.
- C. Student Privacy and Confidential Information:** At all times, and in the use of any form of communications, staff members will always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of employees to have their personal and medical information kept confidential. In practice, this means:

- 1) Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that exposes such information to retrieval by those third parties.
 - 2) Confidential student information may not be posted on the "wall," the "information" section, or through any part of that social network account that would be accessible to any other social network "friends" associated with that account.
 - 3) Private communication with a student through the educational social network account shall be conveyed only through the private email/message feature of the educational social network, so that only the student may view the message and respond to it.
- D. **Archiving Communication:** Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents on educational matters only. Remember that the district's email account can be accessed over the web and downloaded to personal devices. In most instances, it is expected that staff members will use the district's account for all school business keeping in mind that:
- 1) Use of one's personal email account to discuss school business with students and parents is discouraged.
 - 2) Use of personal email, as opposed to a school email account, does not shield such email from the provisions of the public records law or ~~from~~ discovery in litigation. It only prevents the archiving of such messages through the school district's automatic email archiving system.
 - 3) Communication via phone, text, and email should be for educational matters only. If a staff member conveys school related messages to students and parents on his/her private email account or personal phone, including texting, he/she should evaluate whether the message requires documentation. In instances where documentation is required, the staff member should save a paper copy and file it, or document the phone call or text message and save and file it, and regard its privacy, as he/she would any other document that rises to this level.
 - 4) Any document created or received by a public employee in his or her capacity as such is subject to retention and possible disclosure under the public records law.
 - 5) No matter what medium of communication a staff member selects, he/she should adhere to appropriate professional/student boundaries.
 - 6) Staff members remain mandated reporters. If a student indicates he/she is at risk, neglected or is being harmed, the staff member is required by law to report such neglect or harm to the Department of Children and Family Services. The staff member must report his/her concerns to the building principal or designee.
- E. **Free Speech Expectations:** This policy is not intended to infringe upon a staff member's right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow members of their union on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of job duties.
- 1) When a staff member speaks via social networking sites or uses social media as a tool on matters concerning his/her work, he/she is speaking as an employee and not as a citizen.
 - 2) Such restrictions are intended to preserve student confidentiality, maintain the staff member's status as an educator who should command and receive the respect of students, and be able to maintain order and discipline in his/her classroom.
 - 3) If a staff member is communicating as an employee of the district, he/she must be aware that readers will assume that he/she "speaks for the school district." Therefore, all online communications must be professional at all times.
 - 4) Staff members may not, without express permission from the Superintendent of Schools, use the school's logo, likeness or any school photographs or other property that belongs to the school on a social network account.

- F. **Code of Conduct:** Any conduct, whether online or not, that reflects poorly upon the school district or consists of inappropriate behavior on the part of a staff member, may expose an employee to discipline up to and including discharge.
- 1) Even if a staff member is not using a school telephone, computer, classroom or the like to engage in contact with a student, he/she must remember that such contact is not outside of the school district's authority to take appropriate disciplinary action.
 - 2) If a staff member's behavior is inappropriate, undermines his/her authority to instruct or maintain control and discipline with students, compromises his/her objectivity, or causes physical or emotional harm to students, the school district reserves the right to impose discipline.
- G. **Restricted Use of School Resources:** Requests for access to professional social network accounts must be approved by the staff member's direct supervisor, the director of technology, and the superintendent. Staff members may not access their private social networks accounts using school district computer resources during the school day.

Disclaimer: References to various social networks are not included to limit application of this policy to use of just those sites or programs. All online, electronic, telephonic, or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change it is not possible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications.

CROSS REF.: IJNDD Policy on Facebook and Social Networking Web Sites

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:42](#)

File: IJOA

FIELD TRIPS

The North Middlesex Regional School Committee encourages field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in schools.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed to screen, approve, and evaluate trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. Said guidelines and procedures should be developed by the Administration and reviewed and approved by the North Middlesex Regional School Committee.

At a minimum, the regulations shall address:

1. Having signed parental permission for all students attending the trips.
2. Specific guidelines for the appropriate number of chaperones.
3. All safety precautions to be observed.
4. Levels of approval for each type of field trip.

All out-of-state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions; must have advance approval of the North Middlesex Regional School Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

CROSS REF.: [JJH](#), Policy Relating to Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel

SOURCE: MASC

File: JJH

STUDENT TRAVEL

All student trips which include late night or overnight travel must have prior approval of the North Middlesex Regional School Committee. Initial approval by the School Committee is required before engaging students in fundraising activities. The School Committee will also consider the educational value of the trip in relation to the cost prior to granting initial approval. Overnight trips should offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips should be appropriate for the grade level.

Final approval will not be granted until all preparations for the trip according to the regulations in policy JJH-R have been completed. The North Middlesex Regional School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled trip dates.

Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting for privately organized trips through the District and in the school. **Privately organized trips are those trips that utilize a third party company for travel, itinerary and accommodations for a predefined trip.** The School Committee will not review nor approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

SOURCE: MASC March 2004

CROSS REFS.: [IJOA](#), Field Trips

LEGAL REFS.: Chapter 346 of the Acts of 2002 (et al) approved on October 9, 2002

M.G.L. [69:1B](#); [71:37N](#)

STUDENT TRAVEL REGULATIONS

1. Transportation

The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel is prohibited. Late night or overnight trips will use commercial motor coaches.

Trips planned to include late nights or overnight student travel will include a pre-trip check of companies, drivers, and vehicles. CORI checks will be conducted in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38R.

The Superintendent or designee will ensure that the selected carrier is licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The district will not contract with any carrier that has a safety rating of “conditional” or “unsatisfactory”. FMCSA ratings are available at <http://www.saferys.org/>.

The contract with the carrier will prohibit the use of subcontractors unless sufficient notice is given to the district that allows verification of the subcontractor’s qualifications.

2. Trip Scheduling

Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Whenever possible, trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m., due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.

Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacations to minimize lost classroom time. Non-academic field trips are considered “optional school programs” and do not count toward meeting structured learning time requirements. (Refer to the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education publications: Student Learning Time Regulations Guide.)

Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements (Remove **and common sense.**)

Trip scheduling should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic, **late arrivals, stragglers**, and other unanticipated factors.

If not all members of a class are participating in a trip, the school should provide appropriate educational substitute activities for any those students not participating.

3. Fundraising

The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students’ obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.

Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets.

If students are charged individual fees for participation, every effort should be made to provide scholarships where needed.

Additional Resources

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)

<http://www.fmcsa.gov>

United Motorcoach Association – Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide (includes “Motorcoach Safety Checklist)

<http://www.uma.org/consumerhelp/studentguide.asp>

Department of Defense’s approved list of motor carriers

<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>

SOURCE: MASC

APPROVED: March 10, 2004

CROSS REFS.: [IJOA](#), Field Trips

LEGAL REFS.: Chapter 346 of the Acts of 2002 (et al) approved on October 9, 2002

M.G.L. [69:1B](#); [71:37N](#); [71:38R](#)

603 CMR [27.00](#)

EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

In order to assure a high quality of teacher and administrator performance and to advance the instructional programs of the North Middlesex Regional School District, a continuous program for teacher and administrator evaluation will be established by the North Middlesex Regional School Committee. Regular reports will be made to the Superintendent concerning the outcomes of these evaluations.

The evaluation process will include:

1. The development and periodic review of techniques and procedures for making evaluations.
2. Interpretation of the information gained in the evaluative process in ~~order to meet terms of~~ the objectives of the instructional program.
3. The application of the information gained ~~for to the~~ planning ~~of~~ staff development and in-service training activities, which are designed to improve instruction and increase teacher competence.

The evaluation process will include self-evaluation, supervisor initiated observations, and teacher initiated observations.

The formal evaluations will be written and ~~will be~~ discussed by the supervisor and the person being evaluated. The discussions may either precede or follow the writing of the evaluation document. Copies of the written document will be signed by both parties and incorporated into the personnel files of the teacher or administrator. In addition, the individual and his/~~her~~ department chairman (if applicable) will receive a signed copy. The signature should indicate that the evaluation has been read and discussed.

The written evaluation should be specific in terms of the person's strengths and weaknesses. Those areas where improvement is needed should be clearly ~~stated set forth~~ and recommendations for improvement should be ~~noted made~~. Subsequent evaluations should address ~~themselves to~~ any improvement or ~~to~~ any continuing difficulty that is observed.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1B; 71:38; 71:38Q; 150E; 152B

603 CMR 35:00

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Agreement

File: GCQD

RESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

Professional staff members may discontinue their service in the North Middlesex Regional School District during the school year by submitting a written notice of intent to resign to the appropriate hiring authority.

Such written notice of intent to resign will be given to the Superintendent. The staff member will be notified in writing of the Superintendent's action on the resignation.

When a resignation is accepted by the Superintendent, the employee may be expected to continue in service at ~~his/her~~ ~~his or her~~ assigned duties for a period of 30 days after submission of the resignation.

SOURCE: MASC

File: GCQE

RETIREMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

Annually, the Superintendent will inform the North Middlesex Regional School Committee of the professional staff members who have indicated their intention to retire at the end of the current school year. No further School Committee action is necessary unless approval is needed for the payment of or participation in continued local benefits.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: Age Discrimination in Employment Law, P.L. 95-256

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Contract

NOTE: Under Massachusetts law (Teachers' Retirement Act), all professional personnel participate in a teachers' retirement plan, which provides several options on time of retirement and benefits granted to those who retire. It also sets limitations on the number of days a retired employee may be re-employed annually on a temporary basis by the school system. Temporary employment up to 90 days or 720 hours per calendar year is permitted at the discretion of the employer.

SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

The Superintendent will strive to assist personnel ~~in performing to perform~~ their duties efficiently. However, the Superintendent may dismiss any employee in accordance with state law. Further, the North Middlesex Regional School Committee recognizes the constitutional rights of the District's employees and assures them the protection of due process of law. To guarantee such rights, a system of constitutionally and legally sound procedures will be followed in each case of suspension or dismissal of an employee.

When the Superintendent or a Principal determines that sufficient cause exists that a professional employee be suspended or dismissed from service in the North Middlesex Regional School District, ~~he/she he or she~~ will:

1. Be certain that each such case is supported by defensible records.
2. Determine if the individual is to be suspended immediately with the understanding that the suspension will be subject to restoration of salary and position if an appeal is decided in favor of the individual.
3. Follow the procedures for dismissal or suspension that are contained in applicable laws, as well as those included in the current agreement with the teachers' bargaining unit.
4. Provide the individual involved with a written statement that will:
 - a. Indicate whether the action the Superintendent is taking is dismissal or suspension.
 - b. State the reason for the suspension or dismissal.
 - c. Guarantee that all procedures will be in accordance with due process of law.
 - d. Inform employees who have a right to request a hearing under appropriate laws that they may be represented at such a hearing by counsel of their choice.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:42; 71:42D

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the policy subcommittee is being held on Thursday, June 11, 2015 at the Educational Support Center at 9:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Anne Adams and seconded by Crystal Messamore to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Bilotta-Simeone, Recording Secretary