



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Policies and Procedures Minutes 10/29/2007

Arlington School Committee
Policies and Procedures Subcommittee
Monday, October 29, 2007

Members present:

Ron Spangler, Chair
 Sean Garballey
 Jeff Thielman

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 AM.

1. Approval of Minutes, October 16, 2007

On a motion by Mr. Garballey, seconded by Mr. Spangler, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of October 16.

2. Three-Year Policy Review

At the meeting of June 13, the Subcommittee voted to review Sections A through D of the policy manual during the current year, and recommend changes as needed to the full Committee as required by Policy BGC: *Policy Revision and Review*. The Subcommittee commenced that review at this meeting, starting with Policy AA. Discussions summarized below.

- Policy AD: *Educational Philosophy*. Mr. Thielman commented that it has been awhile since this was updated, and the Superintendent should review it. Mr. Spangler noted the policy contains beliefs, mission, and vision, and wonders if there is redundancy with other policies and documents.
- Policy AD-E: *Educational Philosophy (for Arlington High School)*. Subcommittee wonders how this differs from Mission, and whether it is redundant.
- Policy ADA: *School District Goals and Objectives*. Mr. Thielman said this policy appears out of date *vis a vis* Ed Reform. Mr. Spangler followed that goal setting seems well-covered later in the policy manual, where NCLB and Ed Reform are specifically referred to.
- Policy ADA-E: *Arlington High School Mission Statement*. Mr. Garballey noted that this has been updated, but the policy doesn't reflect the update. The Subcommittee discussed including other -E policies for OMS and Elementary schools' mission statements. We were not sure if all schools have them. Mr. Spangler suggested seven elementary school mission statements enshrined in policy would be inconsistent with the current philosophy of commonality and best practices.

There was general agreement that this group of policies is out of date and somewhat oddly structured. As an exercise, the Subcommittee considered the following question put by Mr. Spangler: If we start with a clean sheet, what do we want for the District in terms of statements of philosophy, vision, mission and objectives? The result looked like this:

Statement	District	AHS	OMS	Elementary
Vision	Yes			
Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes	Collectively
Goals	Yes*			

**District goals include high school, middle school, and elementary-specific goals, and are formulated according to a process laid out elsewhere in the policy manual (file BDF A-E-3).*

Mr. Spangler will discuss this framework with the Superintendent, and ask for his and the administrative cabinet's input. Mr. Spangler will also survey other districts' policies for guidance.

It was further remarked that the full Committee and Superintendent discussed district-wide vision and mission at the June retreat. Mr. Spangler will follow up with the Chairperson to ensure that the result of that discussion is included in any restructuring and revision of this segment of the policy manual.

- Policy AE: *Commitment to Accomplishment*. Mr. Thielman remarked that this seems redundant with other policies on goal setting and accountability. It also seems outdated in discussing a direct involvement by the Committee in staff management and accountability, which is inconsistent with the role of the Committee post-Ed Reform. Mr. Spangler will check with MASC for guidance.
- Policy AEB: *Recognition for Service*. This policy covers recognition of retiring Committee members. Mr. Thielman noted that it calls for presentation of a plaque, while recent practice has been to award a chair. Mr. Spangler expressed discomfort with the Committee setting policy about rewarding itself, and suggested this is an anachronistic practice.
- Policy BA: *School Committee Operational Goals*. The Subcommittee believes this policy is out of date, as exemplified by bullet #2 which requires the Committee to set performance goals for each position in the system. The Committee no longer has such authority, per Ed Reform. Mr. Spangler will review MASC sample policies and other districts' policies for guidance.
- Policy BAA: *Evaluation of School Committee Operational Procedures*. The Subcommittee noted that this policy calls for a self-evaluation but provides no guidance on structure and timing of same. Mr. Spangler suggested that an evaluation instrument be developed and added as policy BAA-E. Mr. Thielman remarked that this had been considered before, but rejected on the argument that annual elections are the means for the Committee to be evaluated. Mr. Spangler responded that this policy requires self-evaluation of committee operations, whereas elections are public, political evaluations of individual committee members. It was agreed that Mr. Spangler will consult MASC for precedent and will also solicit input from the full Committee.
- Policy BBA: *School Committee Powers and Duties*. The Subcommittee noted that certain parts of this policy appear out of date. Mr. Thielman suggested the Committee should not approve Principals' contracts or new/changed position descriptions. Mr. Spangler and Mr. Garballey expressed reluctance to cede authority currently exercised by the Committee. Mr. Spangler pointed to the statement in the second paragraph of the policy that to that effect. All agreed that the Committee can reasonably expect to see position descriptions prior to voting on a budget containing new positions. It was agreed that Mr. Spangler will consult with MASC on potential improvements to this policy.

3. Next meeting

The next meeting was tentatively set for Tuesday, November 13th at 8:30 AM.

4. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Garballey, seconded by Mr. Thielman, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:36 AM.