

NHS School Council

February 6, 2024

Attendance: Jim Antonelli, Amber Barbere, Chris Cain, Stacy Gijbsers, Laurie Kench, Mike Testa, Andy Wulf

1) High School Updates

- **Accreditation Priorities**

- Andy Wulf shared the 6 priorities areas for the high school's improvement from the accreditation report.
- The team reviewed these and noted how these have been incorporated into the school improvement plan earlier based on the initial feedback from the visiting team.
- Andy Wulf also mentioned that during a staff meeting scheduled for tomorrow the teachers would be participating in an activity to project out 5 years and brainstorm what the school looks like (what are students, what are teachers doing, what is the school doing) around the 5 buckets of the Portrait of a Graduate. He further explained that the idea behind this brainstorm is to have the teachers help develop the school improvement plan as it relates to engaging the school community in the Portrait of a Graduate.
- [ACCREDITATION PRIORITIES](#)

- **Budget Update**

- Andy Wulf explained how principals will review their budget proposals with the school committee on March 4, 2024
- He asked for members of the council to be in attendance as well if it works for their schedules.
- Andy Wulf mentioned that outside of the Peterson School all of the other asks are contingent on restructuring of programs at the high school and District.

- **Scheduling for 2024-25 School Year**

- Andy Wulf shared how guidance held assemblies this week for grades 9, 10, and 11 to review the course registration process
- Teachers are currently inputting their recommendations and having

conversations with their students about their recommendations.

- The objective this year is the same as last year: Have the schedule completed early enough so that students leave for the summer knowing the classes they are in.

2) Planning to Review and Update the Student Handbook

- Mike Testa introduced that over the next 2 meetings, the objective of the council will be to review the handbook and decide on any policy/procedural changes.
- Andy Wulf commented that any changes the council agrees to will then be reviewed by the policy subcommittee of the school committee.
- Ms. Barbere asked whether or not there was a baseline handbook that all schools follow or does each school develop its own policies. Andy Wulf explained how the school committee has District level policies that the individual schools build their handbooks from. Additionally, the Massachusetts Association of School Committees has policies that most districts will usually be in line with.
- Below are the topics discussed relevant to the student handbook:
 - **Breathalyzers:** Mike Testa mentioned that it may make sense to have this as a section of its own. Based on feedback from earlier in the school year, the team agreed for administration to develop language around the following:
 - Who uses the breathalyzers
 - At what events are the breathalyzers used or on-hand
 - Policies and procedures if a student refuses or fails the breathalyzer.

In preparation for the next meeting, Admn will have draft language for the above areas.

- **MIAA Chemical Health Policy:** The Council reviewed the Chemical Health Policy with the objective of adjusting language in the Clipper Compass to be more in line with MIAA policy. Current language in the Clipper Compass impacts students if they are associated with alcohol. MIAA focuses on possession of alcohol.
 - Parents asked, what standard does the school use to make a decision on a student.
 - Mike Testa responded how we use a police report. Currently our practice is that if the police report names a student as in possession of alcohol/substances then they will have violated the chemical health policy.
 - Parents agreed that the school needs to have a line and using the police report is what makes sense.
 - Mike Testa reviewed the consequences of a chemical health violation. 1st offense student misses 25% of the games in the season. 2nd offense is 60% of the games.
 - Parents asked if coaches educate students on being smart. Admn present commented that coaches constantly remind their students to make smart decisions.

- **Attendance Procedures:** Andy Wulf directed the council to parental feedback submitted through a google form sent home. The feedback in summary questioned the school's practice that if a parent receives a call that their student is absent, but the parent knows or believes they have gone to school, the parent is directed not to call the school.
 - Everyone present agreed that the parent should be able to reach out to the school to verify their student's presence if they receive a call that their student is absent.
 - The admn team agreed to revisit the procedure with the main office administrative staff and have a draft of an updated procedure for the March meeting.

- **Attendance Policy:** The current attendance policy allows students to have 9 unexcused absences before losing credit in course each semester. Part of the school's accountability rating is based on its rate of chronic absenteeism (A student being absent 10% (18 days) or more of the school year. Our current policy allows students to be absent in a full year course 18 days or 10% of the

school year.

- **The administrative team proposed lowering the number of unexcused absences from 9 to either 8 or 7.**
- Parents agreed that the current policy does allow for a lot of absences. Below captures points made in the ensuing conversation:
 - Kids that are chronically absent, the interventions needed most-likely go beyond losing credit in a course.
 - Admn explained that if a student loses credit, a meeting takes place to develop a plan so that a student can earn back their credit.
 - Admn also explained that a team meets biweekly to track student attendance so that interventions can be proactive for students having a hard time coming to school. They further emphasized that Interventions on student attendance are dealt with on a case by case situation.
 - Parents noted that ideally the policy or procedure is able to distinguish between students trying to get away with not being class versus a student who is having difficulty coming to school for mental health/social-emotional reasons.

3) Next Meeting - March 12

- Team will discuss any additional policies that are in need of review.
- The admn. team will present drafts of the following
 - Breathalyzers
 - Chemical Health Violation for Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
 - Attendance Procedures
 - Attendance Policy