

**Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
April 29, 2021**

On April 29, 2021 the Policy Subcommittee held its regular meeting using the Zoom on-line meeting platform.

**In Attendance:** Ms. Ana Nuncio and Mr. Manny Cruz

**Ex Officio Members Present:** Mary Manning

**Members Absent:** Mr. James Fleming

**Others in Attendance:** Dr. Jill Conrad

**Call of Meeting to Order**

Ms. Nuncio called the meeting to order at 8:33 am

**Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Nuncio made a motion to approve the minutes of April 22, 2021. Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was made.

Mr. Cruz                      Yes

Ms. Nuncio                Yes

Motion carries 2-0

**5101 School Age Attendance**

Mr. Cruz stated that he was not comfortable with the legal reference in the language for the age requirements and would like it to reflect more what SPS stands for. Ms. Nuncio would like to keep the legal reference and add additional language explaining that SPS encourages students to stay in school. Dr. Conrad suggested adding language explaining the minimum age requirements and the graduation requirements for beyond age 16. There was concern stated that students will think that at a minimum means that it is not required. Discussion on how to incorporate language that will encourage daily attendance. Dr. Conrad also shared new language regarding excused absences guidelines which she adopted from Holyoke Public Schools. She added that Holyoke has both a chronic absence and student attendance policies. Dr. Conrad also explained that excused and unexcused absences track truancy which is needed for the courts. She explained that some districts require a doctor's note for the absence to be considered excused. The hope is to have the readings and approval before the summer so that this policy can be included in the student handbooks.

Mr. Cruz asked for clarification of what is considered a student's illness or injury. Does mental illness fall under this and is this considered excused or unexcused? Dr. Conrad responded that after 4 days of absence, medical documentation is required. Dr. Conrad asked if the Committee wanted to include mental health as a separate condition? A suggestion was made to change the language to broaden the

description of illness. Dr. Conrad will research how mental health can or cannot be treated under the law.

There was discussion on when a consecutive absence would be considered excused, if not medical. What are legal absences considered? Dr. Conrad shared a list of unexcused absences for the Committee to review. Ms. Manning does not feel that the list needs to be listed in Policy but rather in the handbook. After a brief discussion, language was changed on how schools can stay on top of chronic attendance issues.

#### **5102.01 Enrollment of Non-Resident Students/School Choice**

Dr. Conrad announced that this has been reviewed by both Dr. Zrike and legal counsel and will be discussed at next week's Policy meeting.

The Subcommittee made a decision to meet again on Thursday, May 6th at 8:30 am.

Ms. Nuncio made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 am. Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was made.

Mr. Cruz                                Yes

Ms. Nuncio                            Yes

Motion carries 2-0

Respectfully submitted by,

*Nancy A. Weiss*

Executive Assistant to the School Committee

**Approved May 6, 2021**