

1/27/2020

Residency Subcommittee Meeting

1. Call to Order

a. Introductions

- i. Jana DiNatale- Mayor's Office
- ii. Ryan DiZoglio- School Committee Member
- iii. LouAnn Santos- School Committee Member
- iv. Brandi Kwong- Superintendent
- v. Ed Lussier- Director of Technology/ also manages FRC and Enrollments
- vi. Peg Condon- Enrollment Specialist
- vii. Maureen Abdallah- Enrollment Specialist
- viii. Jayna Zanni Pesce- School Committee Member-NOT PRESENT (illness)

2. Goals of the Subcommittee (established during this meeting- see discussion notes below)

- a. Overarching goals: (1) rewrite the residency policy, (2) partnership with the city to develop enforceable penalties and to streamline residency check processes, (3) Publicize the Tip Hotline

3. Discussion

- RD: offering idea of requiring residency documents for athletics; talked to constituents and there's an opportunity to get documentation from athletes
- EL: Need to rewrite the policy to include ideas from the group like the idea that RD just shared
 - Need to make it more black and white
 - Establish routines that staff and parents can expect- it becomes part of school routine; suggestion of checking residency for students entering grade PK or K, grade 5, and grade 9; also allows district to staff properly to meet the expected requirements
 - Policy should include other measures that the group comes up with
- EL: What we are doing really well:

- all new enrollments, no matter what grade and building have gone through the same exact process and have provided necessary documentation; we can have confidence that any new students for the past few years have satisfied requirements; centralized approach has many benefits
- Confidence in the process is high- referrals are coming in constantly because there is follow through and the process is transparent
- EL: Our Challenges:
 - Secretary positions were cut a few years ago in each building; centralized approach is staffed with only one person who handles residency investigations and checks- 2 enrollment specialists handle it for all new students only (1400 per year); We do not have sufficient staff to do large-scale residency checks
- BK:
 - K,5,9 seems feasible
 - 1400 new registrations come through the FRC with Peg/Maureen; Their focus is on handling all new registrations and address change requests
 - Experienced a different level of problem this past year- dealing with applicants and landlords who are caught lying; What do we do when people lie to us and we prove it? What can we do to landlords who falsely sign documents or falsely verify residency for an applicant? Charging families the average cost per pupil (roughly \$13,000) has not been practical or enforceable.
- JD- suggests that we set a goal: determine what we want a solution to look like and she will bring to council to create an ordinance
- JD- Would still like to figure a way to check all students each year minus students who have been verified by checking city online databases, census, etc.
- JD- Another goal- publicize the residency hotline; possibly put Google Form on website for easy submission
- BK sees policy actions in residency policy falling into two categories (1) reactive, (2) proactive

- BK: recently challenged by requests from parents to stay in the district; requesting that discretion needs to be included in the policy but possibly provide some clearer guidelines
 - JD explains obligation to make sure doing what's best for child- example: last few months for a student in grade 8 and 12
- LS how many requests from parents per week?
 - BK- 2 on my desk; at least 1 per week
- JD suggests we get the number of requests to superintendent per year
 - Suggests we conduct a survey to learn how the public feels about these requests?
- LS classroom sizes are a concern of the public; we really need to consider that while deciding whether or not students can stay
- RD: public concerned about Sped services in particular; people coming to Methuen because of the resources we provide
- RD: is hotline on MCTV?
 - JD we can put it everywhere- MCTV, Newspapers, etc. JD will assist with this
 - For next meeting create a reporting residency concerns brochure that can be shared by sc members/ council members on their pages and circulated in community
- LS: When sending residency checks home, need to do it with some grace
- EL: explained series of letters; first one is 'soft', simply provides the reason for the residency check (like "A letter addressed to this address was returned by the Post Office") and that the district requires updated residency documentation
- BK: need to make sure adhering to laws; especially homeless, foster children
- PC: Agrees that rewriting the policy is a necessary goal for the subcommittee
- EL: I've been typing the minutes and summarized our three goals at the top of this document.
- EL: What are the expectations for our meeting schedule? Can we schedule out a month or more in advance?
 - RD: suggests twice a month through June; then once a month
 - Agreed by all: subcommittee will meet every 2 weeks with ability to cancel if needed

- Meet before SC meetings at 5:30 in MHS Media Center
- Public participation:
 - Comment: Savings from removing students funds additional staff.
 - JD- there's no real cost savings; except if kid is receiving extra services
 - Comment: Signage at schools for hotline?
 - LS- likes this idea, specifically the school signs (not additional lawn signs)
- Next meeting February 10th at 5:30 in the MHS Media Center
 - Topic suggestions for next agenda: hotline info and brochures; info about the residency processes, SRO checks, Address changes, etc; invite a city councillor to begin working on an ordinance