

Virtual Curriculum and Achievement Sub-Committee Report  
Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing CPSD's academic achievement policy, and CPSD policy related to the education of English language learners.

Sub-Committee Members Present: Member Weinstein, Chair; Member Rojas, Member Wilson

Also Present: Dr. Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools

The meeting started at 5:03 pm. Member Weinstein is the chair.

**Chair Weinstein** began the meeting by reading the call of the meeting and discussing meeting objectives which include the review of the district's academic achievement and education of English language learners policies. and meeting attendee introductions.

**Chair Weinstein** turned the meeting over to the administration. Dr. Edwards proposed the best strategy to review the two policies by suggesting that each policy be displayed for meeting attendees for five minutes to review and then a discussion will follow.

The first policy for review was [Policy IK: Academic Achievement](#). The current policy was adopted on May 15, 2018.

**Chair Weinstein** opened the meeting for questions and comments on the policy beginning with members of the public,

Virginia Cuello suggested the possibility of modifications to the policy to address that non-native parents/guardians will be received translated notifications regarding the quarterly updates on the child(ren)'s progress throughout the school year. She also suggested additional communication accessibility to parents/caregivers besides communication via email and other technology efforts.

Bernette Dawson discussed the current policy and provided her perspective as a SEPAC parent in the district. Although she believes the policy itself is great, she is unsure of its utilization with instructors in the district. She inquired about the action plan regarding the policy and what is done once the instructor notifies the parent/caregivers of the student's progress. **Chair Weinstein** acknowledged that the policy seems to be lacking in areas surrounding the policy enactment and ensuring that ways the policy is implemented should be added into the policy. Dr. Edwards also inquired about the district's enactment of the policy and if instructors across the district are following the policy protocol and notifying parents/caregivers in writing four times a year on student progress. She also addressed number 3 on the policy that states *"Insofar as possible, distinctions will be made between a student's attitude and their academic performance"* and mentioned that the language is unclear and can be confusing to families and instructors.

**Member Rojas** discussed the School Committee support efforts listed in the policy to find better ways to measure and report student progress and the wording on the policy suggests that it may be more reporting efforts versus better ways to find methods of improvement and progress. **Member Rojas** also inquired if Policy IK is a standard policy from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and if so, check with the MASC on an updated policy. **Member Rojas** also the reasoning for the policy being flagged for review and discussion. **Chair Weinstein** responded that the reasoning may be due to the date the policy was adopted – which was 4 ½ years ago. Dr. Edwards confirmed that the

MASC does not have an updated policy for IK. She also shared that the current policy seems to address grading more than academic achievement. Virginia Cuello shared her perspective as a parent – that instructor contact regarding progress is made more regularly at the preschool and elementary levels and lacking at the secondary levels.

**Member Wilson** shared her thoughts on the policy and shares the same sentiments that were discussed by others in the meeting as well as a concern regarding language in the policy stating *“Parents/guardians/caregivers will be alerted and conferred with as soon as possible when a child’s performance or attitude becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration.”* **Member Wilson** thinks the language regarding attitude can be triggering especially to people of color and attitude/behavior should be appropriately defined in the policy. **Member Wilson** also discussed that corrective actions and next steps should be defined in the policy as they can differ according to schools, student progress, and grade levels.

Based on the discussions surrounding the policy, **Chair Weinstein** suggested that perhaps three policies or three amendments can come out of Policy IK which include:

- A clear focus on student academic achievement and exclusively defining it
- Assessment and defining how students and the policy are assessed
- Communication and defining how academic achievement are communicated from instructors to families

**Chair Weinstein** also discussed that defining “attitude” and “unsatisfactory” behavior is significant. He also addressed the line item in the policy *“at comparable levels, the school system will strive for consistency in grading and reporting except as this is inappropriate for certain classes or certain students.”* He is concerned that the policy doesn’t define situations where uniformity, consistency, and comparable levels don’t apply to students’ learning. He also discussed assessments and if there may be too many within the district and the importance of ensuring that all assessments that are currently in place are needed.

**Member Rojas** quickly searched the MASC website to locate their student achievement policy. He discovered that Policy IK is based on the MASC policy for “Student Progress Reports to Parents/Guardians”. He also agreed that perhaps two policies can be made for Student Achievement one for student progress reports and one for student achievement. The current district policy took language from the MASC policies and was modified with additional language. **Member Rojas** said that most of the concerns discussed at tonight’s meeting are the additional language that was added by the School Committee at that time and it would be ideal to read the minutes from that meeting to determine what were the discussions the previous committee had before adopting the policy in 2018. Dr. Edwards shared her agreements with recommendations from the members and thinks that subjective language should be modified and/or removed in the policy as well as ensuring that what is in the policy reflects the district entirely (ex. There is a line regarding grading which is non-applicable to the district).

A brief discussion followed on how parent/caregiver support can be included in this policy as well as measurement. It was agreed that the next steps regarding the policy should be to:

- Research the current student achievement policy by determining what is currently being done by instructors in the district
- Read the minutes from the School Committee meeting in which the policy was adopted to get a better consensus on the reasoning behind the language in the policy that was added when the policy was adopted.
- Create a presentation of research findings that the next Curriculum and Achievement Sub-Committee and recommendations for a policy amendment

The second policy for discussion was [Policy IHBE: The Education of English Language Learners](#) and after a five-minute policy review, Chair Weinstein opened the floor for public comment. Virginia Cuello

shared her thoughts on the policy and her experience of filing a waiver for the immersion program. She suggested that having the waiver translated for families is ideal as she would have had a hard experience filling it out if she did not understand English. She also shared that including translators in meetings would be beneficial for families. Dr. Edwards reiterated that a lot of what is addressed in the policy is state law so it is important to ensure that what is state law remains in the policy if it is modified. Dr. Edwards also stated that there was an update on the English Language Learner policy in April 2019 that should be included in an updated policy. **Chair Weinstein** followed Ms. Cuello's comments regarding the waiver process which the district can do more to communicate to families about the waiver and the waiver process. **Member Wilson** stated that the district can make efforts to ensure that the translated waiver is easily translated. She also inquired about the steps regarding the waiver process and if families are aware of it.

**Chair Weinstein** highlighted that a key next step would be to explore feasible options to support interpretation and translation services for families of English language learners.

**Member Rojas** researched the MASC "English Learner Education Policy". The MASC policy is much shorter than CPSD's policy and only states identification, the requirement of support, and references of state requirements. It is interested in determining the reasoning on how the policy language on support types was identified in the policy. **Chair Weinstein** recommends that as the Sub-Committee reviews and revises the policy, English language learner professionals in the district should be included in the discussions. Policy IHBE was identified by the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging as in need of review and Chair Weinstein is interested in identifying other pieces in the policy the office thinks should be reviewed. **Chair Weinstein** also addressed Virginia Cuello's comment on the word "citizenship" in the policy and to further review the reasoning it was included in the policy. **Member Wilson** stated that reviewing the meeting minutes from when the policy was adopted is needed to get a better understanding of the policy language.

**Chair Weinstein** reviewed the next steps for the review of Policy IHBE that include:

- Review of meeting minutes from the date of policy adoption
- Review applicable legal statutes that apply to the policy and ensure the district complies
- Discussion with families of ELL students, instructors/professionals, and ELPAC
- Discussion on research at another Sub-Committee meeting
- Review translation and language access in the district at the next Communications and Community Relations Sub-Committee.

**Chair Weinstein** ended the meeting at 6:27 pm.