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MEMBERS
ALFRED B. FANTINI
JOSE' LUIS ROJAS
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN
RACHEL B. WEINSTEIN
AYESHA M. WILSON

C20-326

--In School Committee--
11/17/2020

Ordered:

That the following be placed on the Calendar:

Whereas several of the new School Committee members expressed their interest in incorporating restorative practices into how this body handles conflicts involving its members in the future; and

Whereas the School Committee's current Code of Ethics focuses only on what is expected from committee members, but not on how the School Committee should respond when a school committee member's actions fall short of those expectations; and

Whereas Vice-Chair Manikka Bowman, suggested at a retreat in February that the School Committee via its Governance Subcommittee take a look at the code of ethics of Cape Cod Technical High School as a possible starting point of how the Code of Ethics could frame how the School Committee should respond when it receives a complaint against one of its members; and

Whereas the proposed revisions to the Code of Ethics uses language that more clearly defines expected behavior, it is important to acknowledge that the language in the rest of the document should be further reviewed at a later date to better describe the expectations of school committee members to the community, the administration and to each other; therefore

Be it resolved, the School Committee adopts these initial modifications to incorporate Restorative Justice into its Code of Ethics.

Cambridge School Committee
Code of Ethics
PROPOSED CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

View Current >>

File: BCA - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS (Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics) Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to school committees, since school committees are agencies of the state. This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above: (1) community responsibility; (2) responsibility to school administration; and (3) relationships

to fellow School Committee members. Should the actions of a school committee member come into question, as being out of alignment with the requirements and expectations of their role, a Restorative Process will be offered to support the members in defining next steps.

A School Committee member in their relations with their community should:

Realize that their primary responsibility is to the children Recognize that their basic function is to be policy making and not administrative Remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all School Committee decisions once they are made Be well informed concerning the duties of a School Committee member on both a local and state level

Remember that they represent the entire community at all times Accept the office as a School Committee member as means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from their School Committee activities Recognize and respect the confidentiality of parent/guardian/caregiver, student, and personnel records. A School Committee member in their relations with their school administration should: Endeavor to establish sound, clearly-defined policies which will direct and support the administration Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging their professional duties and hold them responsible for acceptable results Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at School Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

A School Committee member in their relations with their fellow School Committee members should: Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that they alone cannot bind the School Committee outside of such meetings Realize that they should not make statements or promises of how they will vote on matters that will come before the School Committee Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of their own School Committee or from members of other School Committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

It is the responsibility for all School Committee members to both follow and enforce the letter and spirit of the Member Code of Ethics, Member Authority policies, Non Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment, and Equal Employment Opportunity policy. In order to confirm our acceptance of this point, each member shall sign a copy of each document after its reading and acceptance at the annual organizational meeting.

In the event that a School Committee member observes another member or is made aware by an identified or anonymous individual of another member behaving in a way that might fall short of the expectations set by any of these documents, they will report the behavior to the Chair, the Vice-Chair or a member of the Governance Subcommittee, as appropriate.

The Chair, the Vice-Chair, member of the Governance Subcommittee or their designate will speak to the member in question to share the concern and will call for an executive session of the School Committee to discuss the report. The School Committee will then re-convene in open session. If the majority of the School Committee then votes in favor that the report is indeed an issue, support will be provided to address the behavior: Initially, the member in question will be offered the use of Restorative Justice to solve the problem. If the member in question does not claim some responsibility for the complaint against them or if Restorative Justice is not implemented, the School Committee could consider the following in open session: Vote for an external in-depth examination of the complaint, with the cost, selection process and scope of the examination discussed in public. Vote to censure the member in question Vote to consider other actions as appropriate

The School Committee shall keep a record of all Executive Sessions where reports of instances of a member falling short of expectations were discussed and how the complaints were addressed.

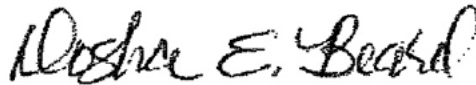
Adopted: TBD

#20-279 Motion by Member Fantini

That the School Committee provide relief requested by School Principals at a special meeting held on Tuesday, October 27th -called by the School Committee, relative to our system of Weekly Check-Ins. Further, until such time the School Climate Subcommittee returns to the entire school committee a revised recommendation to ensure that student check-ins are providing meaningful support to our students with the appropriate systems, procedures, rationale and reporting to support said goal.

All principals have critiqued the current procedures in place and have pointed out several key observations as follows: Not every student may need or benefit from this type of outreach, especially given current degree of student/staff engagement in every student's daily schedule. Family preference Demands on all staff members' time Data entry

A true copy:



Dosha E. Beard

Executive Secretary to the School Committee

C:
Governance Sub-Committee
Motion # 20-278