



New Hope-Solebury School District

Bullying Ad Hoc Committee

April 20, 2016 - 6:00 PM

District Office Conference Room

Attendance

- **School Board** –Mark Cowell
- **Administration** – Dr. Steve Yanni, Dr. Mike McKenna, Dr. Chris Cortellessa
- **Committee Members** –Juli Vogelsang, Wayne Fowler, Melvin Band, Sarah Zimov Levinson, Deborah Peckman, Gretchen Reilly, Stan Marcus, Pam Thompson
- **Presenters** – None
- **Public** – None

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Yanni at 6:00PM.

New Business

- Members of the committee (listed above) were approved as member of the Bullying Ad Hoc Committee.
- Dr. Yanni reviewed the purpose/function of the Bullying Ad Hoc Committee. The purpose/function includes:
 - Agree upon an operational definition of bullying and provide examples as well as non-examples of bullying
 - Review Policy 249: Bullying/Cyber Bullying Policy and related administrative regulations
 - Define current approaches to bullying education, prevention, and intervention at each level and complete a gap analysis between current practice and research
 - Provide recommendations for revised approaches to bullying for the 2016-2017 school year
- The committee reviewed the operational definition of bullying. The definition is: Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. The committee decided to merge this with the definition already available in Policy 249. It was noted that Policy 249 focuses on students and

employees; however, the committee's focus for their work will be child-centered.

- It was agreed upon that Policy 249 will include a confidentiality clause to protect students who are being bullied and to align with FERPA regulations.
- It was agreed upon that the committee would receive the proposed revised Policy 249 in advance of the next meeting. The policy will be reviewed again at the next meeting.
- Dr. Yanni, Dr. Cortellessa, and Dr. McKenna spoke to the need of rewriting the administrative regulations to align with the confidentiality clause being proposed as a part of the policy.
- Various members of the committee spoke at length to their experiences with bullying and how it was handled. Moving forward, it is the belief that maintaining a level of confidentiality will increase the likelihood of addressing and changing behavior. Mr. Band specifically spoke about "hot spots" in buildings (i.e. cafeterias, locker rooms, etc.)
- The committee discussed how we have to help students become comfortable with reporting bullying. A parent suggested that when a parent calls about a bullying situation it should be investigated. Dr. McKenna and Dr. Cortellessa spoke to the investigation process. Again, the committee discussed how we have to help students become comfortable with reporting incidents. The hope is that the confidentiality clause will help change that culture, although it will take time.
- The committee discussed current approaches to bullying at each level: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The preponderance of issues happen in grades 5-8. We are examining means of education, prevention, and intervention that are age, developmentally, and gender appropriate.
- The committee was reminded that incidents that happen outside of school cannot be dealt with by school staff unless there is a nexus (connection) to school.
- The committee discussed that education, prevention, and intervention has to be sensitive of students' emotional well-being.
- Dr. Yanni announced that our next meeting will take place on May 18, 2016 at 6PM. At that time, we will do a gap analysis between current practices in our buildings and best practices as evidenced by literature/research.

Dr. Yanni adjourned the meeting at 7:28PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven M. Yanni, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools