

**The following item will be discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be held Thursday, June 9, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. in Room 410 at the Durkin Administration Building:**

gb #5-291 - Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Mr. Foley (October 19, 2015)

Request that the School Committee review the policy on cell phones and gather information from all secondary principals.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, June 9, 2016

ITEM: Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Mr. Foley (October 19, 2015)

Request that the School Committee review the policy on cell phones and gather information from all secondary principals.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 11-5-15 - Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.  
Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:  
Request that the Administration seek input regarding the cell phone policy from teachers, through the EAW, administrators at the secondary level and from students on the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council.  
On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
- 4-26-16 - **STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**  
A group of secondary principals attended the meeting to discuss possible changes to the cell phone policy.  
Some of the suggestions made included:
- creation of three separate policies for elementary, middle and secondary schools
  - retention of cell phones in lockers for middle school students
  - delineate ways to use cell phones in an appropriate way for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning at the high school level
  - restrictions for video and audio
  - access to well defined professional use of cell phones
  - restrictions relative to computer watch use
  - proper phone etiquette early, perhaps in 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- (Continued on page 2.)

BACKUP:

Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of chart comparing the chart comparing the:

- 2015-16 Policies Handbook
- Principal's version
- Mr. Monfredo's version

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

4-26-16 - Miss Biancheria indicated that the amended cell phone policy (continued) should be included in the 2016-17 Policies Handbook. The following principals volunteered to serve on a committee to develop proposed elementary, middle and high school cell phone policies:

Mr. Peter Bowler	Mr. Ricci Hall
Mrs. Lisa Dyer	Mrs. Houlihan
Mr. William Foley	Mr. Whalen

The committee should forward the proposed policies to the School Committee Office on or before, May 11, 2016 for presentation at the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee issue.

4-28-16 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as amended. A group of secondary principals attended the meeting to discuss possible changes to the cell phone policy. Some of the suggestions made included:

- creation of three separate policies for elementary, middle and secondary schools
- retention of cell phones in lockers for middle school students
- delineate ways to use cell phones in an appropriate way for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning at the high school level
- restrictions for video and audio
- access to well defined professional use of cell phones
- restrictions relative to computer watch use
- proper phone etiquette early, perhaps in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Miss Biancheria indicated that the amended cell phone policy should be included in the 2016-17 Policies Handbook.

The following principals volunteered to serve on a committee to develop proposed elementary, middle and high school cell phone policies:

Mr. Peter Bowler	Mr. Ricci Hall
Mrs. Lisa Dyer	Mrs. Houlihan
Mr. William Foley	Mr. Whalen

The committee should forward the proposed policies to the School Committee Office on or before, May 18, 2016 for presentation at the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

Mr. O'Connell stated the system did not need a new policy, revised policy or a watered down policy. What is needed is an effective, consistent enforcement of the current Cell Phone Policy. By policy, the principals require that students put their cell phones in their locker at the beginning of the day and that it remain there during the course of the day and the students take it home at the end of the day.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 4-28-16 - (continued) The Administration hears periodic arguments about how a cell phone can be useful in school. What is not often addressed is why a cell phone can be a significant problem in school. Everyone knows that it is a distractive device. Students are specifically in school to learn and are not in school to be distracted by whatever other factors interfere with their concentration on learning and their focus on instruction. If the Administration allows students to have cell phones during the day, it serves as an ongoing distraction to the students not only at the elementary and middle school levels but especially at the high level where the academic work is all that more sophisticated. He indicated concern that schools have essentially unfurled the white flag of surrender in terms of enforcing the policy that the system now has in effect. The policy needs to be not just retained but also enforced. He suggested that the Administration needs to send a message to the principals and support our teachers who want to enforce a vigorous policy with regard to no use of cell phones in class.
- 6-1-16 - This item was held due to a delay in getting it reviewed and approved as to form.

2015-16 Handbook	Backup for Standing Committee	John Monfredo's New Version
Rule 13. – Cellular Telephones, beepers, iPods/MP3 Players and Laser Pointing Devices	Rule 13. – Cell Phones, iPods, Smart - Watches and other electronic devices	Rule 13. – Cell Phones, iPods, Smart - Watches and other electronic devices
A student shall not use a beeper, pager, film/digital camera or two-way radio communications device of any type, iPods/MP3 player, Bluetooth and other wireless devices, and any potentially disruptive electronic device on school premises or at a school sponsored situation without expressed permission of appropriate school personnel.	A student shall not use any device listed above or any other wireless device which may potentially be deemed disruptive on school premises or at a school sponsored situation without expressed permission of appropriate school personnel.	A student shall not use any device listed above or any other wireless device which may potentially be deemed disruptive on school premises or at a school sponsored situation without expressed permission of appropriate school personnel.
Any such device found in a locker may be considered to be in the possession of the student assigned to the locker for purposes of disciplinary action.	Any such device found in a locker may be considered to be in the possession of the student assigned to the locker for purposes of disciplinary action.	Students are not permitted to have their cell phones powered on or visible at any time during the school day.
However, cell phones and iPods/MP3 players may be brought to school but must be secured in the student's locker.	However these devices may be brought to school but must be secured in the student's locker.	The school also reserves the right to indicate where cell phones are stored.
The Worcester Public Schools is not responsible for lost or stolen property.	The Worcester Public School is not responsible for lost or stolen property.	
A student shall not possess a laser pointing device of any type on school premises or at a school sponsored situation, unless such device is distributed by a teacher or its use is authorized by a teacher in connection with school work.		
Use of a laser pointing device against the face, eyes, or head of another person on school premises or at a school sponsored situation may be considered use of a weapon for disciplinary purposes include the possibility of expulsion.		

2015-16 Handbook	Backup for Standing Committee	John Monfredo's New Version
	<p><b><u>Cell Phone Policy:</u></b></p> <p>Students are not permitted to have their cell phones powered on or visible at any time during the school day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school reserves the right to indicate where cell phone are stored</li> </ul>	
	<p><b><u>Enforcement and Penalties:</u></b></p> <p>Each school will designate staff to monitor student violations of the cell phone policy.</p> <p>School Administration reserves the right to confiscate cell phones during the course of a potential violation of the code of conduct.</p> <p>Penalties for students found in violation of the policy will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First offense: Student's cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.</li> <li>• Second and subsequent offenses: Students cell phone will be confiscated and returned only to the student's parent or guardian.</li> <li>• Student committing repeated violations of this policy may be subject to additional disciplinary action, consistent with the Worcester Public Schools Code of Conduct up to and including suspension from school.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Enforcement and Penalties:</u></b></p> <p>Each school will designate staff to monitor student violations of the cell phone policy.</p> <p>School Administration reserves the right to confiscate cell phones during the course of a potential violation of the code of conduct.</p> <p>Penalties for students found in violation of the policy will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First offense: Student's cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.</li> <li>• Second and subsequent offenses: Students cell phone will be confiscated and returned only to the student's parent or guardian.</li> <li>• Student committing repeated violations of this policy may be subject to additional disciplinary action, consistent with the Worcester Public Schools Code of Conduct up to and including suspension from school.</li> </ul>