



RSU 21 Policy Committee Minutes
May 7th 2026 (12:30 PM)
Kennebunk Elementary School Board Room A102

Committee Members Present: Leah Bares, Mandy Cummings (Chair), Brian McGrath, Wayne Sargent
Administration Members: Assistant Superintendent - Dr. Paul Rasmussen

The Policy Committee met on May 7th, 2026 to continue its work on priority policy updates and ongoing initiatives remaining from the April 29th, 2026 Policy Committee meeting. Committee members present included Leah Bares, Mandy Cummings, Wayne Sargent, Brian McGrath. Committee member Kirstan Watson was absent and excused.

Policy Committee Minutes

The committee voted to approve minutes for the March 20th, April 2nd, and April 29th meetings, bringing all minutes current.

Legislative Updates

Chair Cummings mentioned the MSMA emails directed to the Board regarding a preliminary ruling on sample policy BEDH, noting MSMA is recommending changes to that policy based on the ruling. The Chair noted that while several other districts were reviewing their Public Comment policy at the same time RSU 21 did last year, our district chose to expand public participation rather than limit it. Comparing the recommendations to our current policy shows we are already doing many of the things MSMA recommends updating, such as allowing non-community members to speak while prioritizing residents. The policy may still benefit from an update in the next fiscal year, as MSMA recommends providing definitions, which the new style guide already requires of us. For RSU 21 this should not be a significant lift or meaningfully change our practice, and we will check with the attorney. Based on reading the new sample recommendation against our current policy, we are in substance already aligned with the preliminary ruling and any changes would largely be consistent with the style guide we are now using.

Policy Actions: Old Business

JICJ - Personal Electronic Devices

The committee reviewed policy JICJ in line with the new budget statute language. Member Brian requested clarification regarding internet or cellular connectivity to align with the

provision of the law that specifically references devices with internet or cellular connectivity. The committee agreed to include that language, noting that other devices such as older iPods can still be distracting but are not included in the law as written. The committee also updated the terminology from personal communication devices to personal electronic devices.

The committee reviewed comments added during the first read regarding encouraging caregivers to communicate with administrators regarding student-specific needs, as part of the Board and community request to be thoughtful about language. The policy includes legally protected uses, building in language to ensure clarity around approved uses, and noting that approved uses must follow those documented plans. The committee aimed to clarify in policy sections where this policy may conflict with or be vague about an authorized documented use, the authorized documented use authority will prevail. The committee discussed liability and took the recommendation of the attorney in drafting that section, noting that waiving protections in a policy is not advised, but that does not mean there will not be cases where the district is deemed responsible on a case-by-case basis. The implementation date was also clarified.

The committee recapped the extensive process behind this policy, starting from querying other districts, holding workshops and surveys, monitoring the Governor's bill, and reviewing the MSMA sample policy that was developed near the end of our own development process. The committee noted what a significant and inclusive effort this has been and thanked Paul for his thorough work. While the law requires a bell-to-bell restriction, the district undertook a robust effort in advance of that requirement, and this is a thoughtful and meaningful policy that completes one of the committee's goals for this fiscal year.

Action: Brian Motioned, Mandy Seconded - Approved unanimously (4–0)

JIC - Code of Conduct

The committee reviewed policy JIC, noting that the Code of Conduct policy is an overview of the standards the Board is setting and references the laws that shape the policies we have put in place. It serves as a philosophy of the district and a reference point for why we develop and implement the policies we do. The committee noted we were waiting for the updated Personal Electronic Devices policy to include a reference herein. The discrimination and harassment section was updated to reflect current statutory language, as was the discipline section, noting the law regarding students in grade 5 or below calls for restorative approaches and restricts out-of-school suspensions to very limited safety-related reasons only. The policy also notes that removal of recess for punitive purposes is not permitted.

Action: Leah Motioned, Wayne Seconded - Approved unanimously (4–0)

Policy Actions: New Business

BG-R2 - Policy Manual Style Guide

The committee reviewed and discussed the Policy Manual Style Guide, which the committee has been following this year. The guide was provided by Brian in the fall of 2025 and has been available at each meeting for comment and discussion throughout the year. The committee made one final change, requiring that defined terms be capitalized throughout a policy as an indicator that a definition exists for reference. The committee noted that housing the style guide within a procedure for the Policy Committee rather than as a formal policy requiring a first and second read would be more prudent, allowing future policy committees to edit it as appropriate. The committee also added a note to the guide referencing the implementation date of May 7th, 2026.

Action: Brian Motioned, Leah Seconded - Approved unanimously (4–0)

JLI - Dangerous Student Behavior Prevention and Intervention

The committee reviewed a new sample policy from MSMA regarding 20-A MRSA §6555. Dr. Rasmussen noted the district is already following these practices procedurally but that a policy is required and not currently in place. Leah noted that the definition of Assigned Public School Employee may benefit from the word “local” Dr. Rasmussen noted the style guide requires definitions to be taken directly from statute when a statutory definition exists, the statute was reviewed and the change was made accordingly. Questions regarding when parents are given notice or brought into the process were addressed by reference to procedures already in development, which provide that parents are brought in when the investigation finds the student did engage in dangerous behavior, to help draft the individualized response plan. That language was incorporated into the policy. Questions regarding whether other uninvolved staff need to be made aware were addressed by reference to privacy protections defined in law. Brian suggested updating the title of the policy to Dangerous Student Behavior Prevention and Intervention to reflect the statutory language rather than a truncated title.

Action: Leah Motioned, Wayne Seconded - Approved unanimously (4–0)

JJE - Student Fundraising Activities

The committee began reviewing JJE and noted that committee questions were leaning into procedural rather than policy questions. The committee recognized the policy would benefit from having procedural language removed, as has been the case with several updated policies this year, noting that a five-page policy may become a two-page policy accompanied by a set of

administrative procedures. The committee agreed to table the policy for the new committee in the next fiscal year, noting the timeline to complete a first and second read within this fiscal year has passed if a first read did not come out of today's meeting.

Next Meeting The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for **May 20th, 2026 at 12:30pm**