

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

I. Call to Order

Noticing a quorum, Chairperson, Jackson Matos called the virtual School Committee Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A Zoom video conference meeting accessible via SHCTV15 and SHCTV.com made possible by Governor Baker's June 16, 2021, remote meeting provision to the March 12, 2020, COVID-19 Emergency Order.

In Attendance: Allison Schlachter, Chairperson
Jackson Matos, Assistant Chairperson
Danielle Cooke, Member
Eric Friesner, Member
Lynda Pickbourn, Member
Junoon Giridhar, Student Representative
Mark McLaughlin, Acting Superintendent of the South Hadley Public Schools
Jennifer Voyik, Acting Assistant Superintendent of Finance and
Business Operations for South Hadley Public Schools

Guests: Amy Foley, President of SHEA

II. Loss of Ansleigh McDaniels

Chairperson Jackson Matos requested a moment of silence in acknowledgment of the loss of Ansleigh McDaniels. South Hadley Public Schools stands in solidarity with neighboring districts who have had loss of lives in their communities while sending our condolences as well. In Buffalo, New York there was a loss of life due to racism, as well.

Dr. Matos states that these tragedies make me prioritize his own life and the importance of kindness. We cannot control the world, but what we can control is how we are in the world and kindness is one of the things that we can control. Treat everyone like their treasured and treat everyone like they're having a rough day.

III. Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Jackson Matos confirmed the review of the minutes for May 5 and May 12, 2022. The minutes for April 28, 2022, will be reviewed in the next meeting. He entertained a motion from Eric Friesner to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Lynda Pickbourn. No further discussion. Motion passed: 5/0 (Schlachter, Cooke, Friesner, Pickbourn and Matos).

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

IV. Approval of Warrants

Chairperson Jackson Matos entertained a motion to approve the warrants. Danielle Cooke made a motion to approve the following Warrants and Bi-Weekly Payroll. Chairperson Jackson Matos made a motion for approval of said warrants. It was moved by Danielle Cooke and second by Lynda Pickbourn. No further discussion. Motion passed: 5/0 (Schlachter, Cooke, Friesner, Pickbourn and Matos).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
May 3, 2022	Warrant #2022-257	\$224,454.21
May 10, 2022	Warrant #2022-262	\$150,495.35
May 12, 2022	Bi-Weekly Payroll	\$768,051.85

V. Reports of Standing Committees

- a. School Committee Liaison Reports
- b. Advisory Committees
- c. Site-Based Committees

Chairperson Matos acknowledged and welcomed their new student representative, Junoon Giridhar.

Racial Justice Task Force

Chairperson Jackson Matos stated that they will meet next week. They are doing something different called "Share the Chair", where members can work together to share the leadership of that committee.

Vice Chair, Allison Schlachter asked what does Share the Chair look like... Chairperson Matos stated that two (2) people will co-chair.

Appreciations

Allison Schlachter acknowledges the Crisis Care Team had to come together to coordinate the care of the staff and students this past Monday. She knows how much hard work it takes and the emotional strain that goes into it. In addition to the love and the care when people are grieving to go into action, that it's very difficult work. She wanted to thank everyone that was on the Crisis Care Team this week.

Danielle Cooke gave her appreciation to Chairperson Matos and Dr. McLaughlin for their work with The Collaborative. They were able to learn a lot and she's excited to work again with them.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

Chairperson Matos stated that they will provide that information to Liz Wood, who was their connector to The Collaborative for Educational Services.

VI. Public Comment

No Public Comments.

VII. Discussion and Action Items

a. SHEA Updates

Amy Foley, SHEA President, shared her condolences to Ansleigh McDaniel's family, as well as the Mosier School educators and the community that worked directly with Ansleigh. Her thoughts and prayers go out to all of you at this difficult time.

President Foley reached out to educators in each of the buildings to get their input and reflection on teaching in South Hadley this year. What she realized is that educators and the students need is the School Committee's help and now more than ever, their partnership. As she received updates from teachers, she saw many of the same themes, and to say this year has been difficult is an understatement.

- Behaviors of children have been challenging this year
 - More students addicted to devices and cannot hold conversations with adults or peers.
- Preschool teachers state that incoming students are lacking social and emotional skills greater than in previous years, probably because of extended screen time with parents working from home or caregivers juggling too many things at once.
- Teachers at all levels in motor and social interactions are greatly decreased
- Wait for IEP paperwork, which is delaying additional support for some children
- More distressed students that are lashing out or not in a mindset that they are able to learn
- Uptick in COVID cases with an extreme number of absences
- Difficulty to get substitutes and paraprofessionals
- Low morale of educators in South Hadley
- Settlement of contract

Chairperson Matos expressed their appreciation of the challenges faced with by the needs of their schools.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

b. Report of the Acting Superintendent

Dr. McLaughlin echoed Chairperson Matos on how the loss of a child is the worse thing a family could ever imagine, and it happened to a family in our community. It is just heartbreaking. Tomorrow is "Purple Day" in honor of Ansleigh, whose favorite color was purple.

The community was messaged about a concerning rise in COVID cases in South Hadley. He wants to drive the point home that when we have a significant rise from week-to-week in COVID cases in students and staff there are impacts in student operations. You hear it many times that we do not have an endless supply of substitutes. They have done well to remain open with a significant loss of staff due to dealing with their own illness and that continues to be a daily concern. The way to keep people safe is to keep people home that are not well. It does not help the district school community to send a sick child to school because it creates the condition whereby it makes it harder to maintain operations.

The Leadership Team has been working very hard to come together as a new team to look at the challenge that they have in front of them relative to the School Improvement Plan upon that they can take action by re-evaluating the template itself. They are looking at the plan organically, from the ground up, to show where the district can go, which takes time. They will be prepared within the next few weeks to provide something credible that reflects the collective thoughts of this new team. It provides a good blueprint of where they believe student improvement needs to be over the next two (2) years.

c. Report of the Chair and School Committee

Chairperson Matos asked that the entire community wear purple tomorrow to show support for the school and Ansleigh McDaniel's family.

Chairperson Matos stated that graduation for South Hadley High School will be held at Mt. Holyoke College. If it is held indoors, the campus expects attendees and students to wear masks.

The School Committee was at a training / Listening Session with The Collaborative of Educational Services had three (3) facilitators last night. They spoke about their goals, hopes and concerns. They will return to speak discuss a specialty designed training on diversity and equity work. It was a fun way to spend a Wednesday night.

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

d. Report of Student Representative

Junoon Giridhar provided the following information with regards to the South Hadley Public Schools. Student was having technical difficulties and unable to hear. He gave a brief introduction. His name Junoon is from the Arabic word "passion". He's a member of SUCO as well as a member of Student Council. He is inspired to be part of a group that will benefit change not just for faculty, staff and students, but for the community of South Hadley overall.

Plains

- Field Day on June 2, 2022 (Raindate on June 3, 2022)

Mosier

- June 6th – Children's Library will visit to talk about Summer Programs
- June 7th – Second Grade - Games Day
- June 8th – First Grade will have their Step-Up Day to Mosier
- June 9th - Third Grade – Games Day
- June 10th – Fourth Grade – Games Day
- June 17th is Last Day of School
- This week Mosier completed their MCAS testing and looking forward to their end of the school year activities.

MESMS

- No Report

SHHS

- *Art Department*
 - May 19th there will be a Spring Concert
- *Athletics*
 - Boys & Girls Track would like to thank everyone who came out to get their car washed on Saturday.
- Senior Night

Chairperson Matos stated there was technical difficulties and they were unable to hear them. Junoon Giridhar was able to resolve the issue and continue with his report.

- South Hadley vs. Amherst won 2-0
- Boy's Lacrosse will play Belchertown at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 23 at Home
- Girl's Lacrosse will play at Hampshire Regional on Tuesday, May 24 at 4:00 p.m.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

- “Be The Change” project is collecting dog food, treats, toys and blankets. All donations are going towards local animal shelters. They are really excited to help and give back to the community and hope that families can help them out.
- Class of 2022 have extra lawn signs and magnets for sale. Please reach out to Kaily Godek at khgodek2022@student.shschools.com
- Baccalaureate Ceremony will be held on June 2, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. at South Hadley High School Auditorium. The ceremony is a time of reflection of the memories of high school and a time to acknowledge the aspects of the senior class. This ceremony is open to all students, caregivers, and faculty.
- Class of 2022 Graduation is Friday, June 3, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the amphitheater at Mt. Holyoke College
- All School Awards assembly will be held on June 1, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in SHHS gymnasium. This is so the departments can honor students with special awards
- Music
 - The cast and crew of “Into the Woods” would like to thank everyone who came out to see the musical
- National Honor Society
 - Clothing Drive for the Salvation Army. They are accepting slightly used clothing, coats and shoes that can be dropped off at the box outside of the South Hadley main entrance.
 - Clean-up around the turf on May 22nd
- May 16th students of SHHS participated in the second training of the Sandy Hook Promise Initiative
- SHMPROV hosting their final show of the year on June 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the SHHS Auditorium
- Western MA Association for Student Councils Spring Conference was held on Monday, May 16, 2022. Students were elected for the Student Board for the coming year.
- Student Council recognition ceremony was moved to Tuesday, June 14th
- Lip Sync Battle scheduled for May 20th has been Cancelled

Chairperson Matos congratulated him and he has a great broadcasting voice. He may have a career in broadcast or radio. He also stated that he got their car washed and it was really fast and really good. He also bought another magnet for their car because the last one fell off at another car wash location.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

e. School Climate Policy Manual

Lynda Pickbourn-Smith had raised the question whether if there was a policy manual that was easily accessible to all of them. Allison Schlachter sent a copy of the 544-page document to them. Ms. Pickbourn states that quite a bit will need to be updated and she is plotting her way through it.

Vice Chair Schlachter discussed the idea of putting together a School Committee Sub-Committee handbook at some point. She asked if that was something that they would like to officially form at this point or wait until later. Ms. Pickbourn believes that it would be something that will need several members input, she is willing to discuss it. Vice Chair Schlachter stated that when this manual was written it was done with the assistance of the MASC. She believes that the MASC participates a lot in the writing of these manuals and it may be worth reaching out to Liz LaFond for their guidance and involvement along with two (2) or more School Committee members.

Chairperson Matos suggested that they can look at it in chunks. He asked if Vice Chairperson Schlachter was interested in being on this subcommittee. Allison Schlachter stated that they should wait until Ms. Pickbourn has had a moment to speak with MASC before creating a subcommittee.

Jennifer Voyik confirmed that the manual they were discussing was the District Policy or a separate policy document for the School Committee. Lynda Pickbourn stated that the School Committee policies are combined with the school district policies.

Danielle Cooke asked how often does the PDF on the School website get updated. Jennifer Voyik stated that she has had these conversations with Dr. McLaughlin and a lot of districts have their policies right on the MASC website and you can do an online search for keywords. It would be great to have it on one location with a link from our website.

Dr. McLaughlin commented that the review of policies happens for two (2) reasons:

- Because the date is pretty old, which needs to be reviewed and noted up-to-date
- A policy that may seem reasonable, may not do it anymore, which may need to be changed to fall within our needs.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

f. Updated Transportation Policy (vote)

Jennifer Voyik shared her screed with the current policy for SHPS (EE). (See attached)

- They are requesting a change for the mileage of all students living one mile or more in grades K through 8 to receive transportation at no cost.
- Students living less than one mile can receive transportation on a fee basis
- High School students who already have a fee will be able to ride the bus.
- It also explains how they would measure “One Mile Limit”

Lynda Pickbourn asked what we are thinking about in terms of fees, particularly, high school students. Jennifer Voyik responded that the guideline from DESE is that the district provide transportation for students K through 6, however, SHPS provides it from K through 8th grades. They are not required to provide transportation at all for high school students, but they wanted to provide that service, which would be at a fee and that extra tier would be covered. The current fee would be \$1.00 a day or \$180 / year. If you have free or reduced lunch, you will receive a reduced rate or free of charge.

Lynda Pickbourn asked if that covered the costs or does the district still have additional costs that are not covered by these fees. Jenn Voyik stated that the district still covers the majority of that cost. Ms. Pickbourn continued if there is a difference between the cost for those who take the bus and those who drive pay? Ms. Voyik stated that they can purchase a combined pass for the same price, they would not have to pay anything additional for a parking spot. Currently, the bus pass is \$125, and the parking pass is \$50 or a combined pass for \$175 for both, including PVPA students. Because we are currently charging our high school students, we should also charge those going to PVPA. Ms. Pickbourn had a follow-up question that currently it's cheaper to drive your car than it is to take the bus. Ms. Voyik confirmed that it is because you're just paying for the parking spot. The car owner is paying for the vehicle, gas and maintenance on the car. The bus pass is broken down to cover the driver, the gas, the maintenance costs, etc. Ms. Pickbourn stated that there's an argument to be made to drive the school bus instead of driving to school, environmentally. She believes the price structure would encourage the student to drive. Lynda Pickbourn wanted to lower the cost of taking the bus pass. Danielle Cooke stated that it's lower than neighboring districts. Brief discussion between School Committee members.

Chairperson Jackson Matos entertained a motion to approve the proposed changes to the Student Transportation Policy. The motion was moved by Danielle Cooke and second by Lynda Pickbourn. No further discussion. Motion passed: 5/0 (Schlachter, Cooke, Friesner, Pickbourn and Matos).

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

g. Student Transportation Services Policy (vote)

Jennifer Voyik discussed the policy Student Transportation Parking Fee (EER) revisions that they would like to add in paragraphs 1 and 5 of the “Fees”, as well as paragraphs 1 and 2 of the “Reduced Rates” sections. (See attached)

Danielle Cooke confirmed for the public that following the passing of these policies, the bus registration will go to the community. Jennifer Voyik confirmed that a final form is ready to go as long as the School Committee is all set with the policy updates and the rates. They have included in the new transportation packets, which they plan to send out digitally with a Google Form and paper copies with the students next week.

Chairperson Jackson Matos entertained a motion to approve the proposed changes for the Student Transportation Services Policy. The motion was moved by Danielle Cooke and second by Allison Schlachter. No further discussion. Motion passed: 5/0 (Schlachter, Cooke, Friesner, Pickbourn and Matos).

Chairperson Matos appreciates the inclusion of gender-neutral language in the updated policies. It’s the little things that are DEI.

Jennifer Voyik asked if there needs to be a separate line item agenda to vote on the transportation rates. Danielle Cooke believes that because it was part of the policy, that the rates were included in their vote. Chairperson Matos looked to Vice Chair Schlachter for guidance in this question. Allison Schlachter responded that she believes the policy has been reviewed adequately enough that they would be able to vote on that tonight if that will help to move things forward.

Chairperson Matos entertained a motion to approve the proposed rates for transportation at One Hundred Eight and 00/100 (\$180.00) Dollars for full-price bus transportation; Ninety and 00/100 (\$90.00) Dollars for reduced rate bus transportation; and free for free-lunch students based on the policy for students less than one (1) mile. Allison Schlachter took a second look at the policy. There was some discussion on how the motion should be proposed and whether they should be combined with it. Vice Chair Schlachter wants to stay within Roberts Rules and rules around motions, they want to make sure that it’s done correctly.

Chairperson Matos proposed an updated motion stating approving the proposed changes to the Transportation Services including the changes to the fee schedule. Vice Chair Schlachter agrees that would be acceptable instead of doing two (2) different motions.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

Chairperson Matos entertained a motion to approve the proposed changes to the Student Transportation Policy including the proposed changes to the Fee Schedule. The motion was moved by Allison Schlachter and seconded by Danielle Cooke. No further discussion. Motion passed: 5/0 (Schlachter, Cooke, Friesner, Pickbourn and Matos).

Vice Chair stated that “let the minutes show that the original motion was replaced by the second motion”.

Jennifer Voyik appreciated that they were able to make that work so they can send out the forms to the community.

Dr. McLaughlin commented that this is a good example of what is important about School Committee work. It has to be done right and sometimes there needs to be this back-and-forth. He appreciates the School Committee’s due diligence to pay attention to the weigh and the process because it does really matter. The most important work of the school committee is this...

h. Update on Development of School and District Improvement Plans

Dr. McLaughlin stated that he has not further discussion about the School Improvement Plan, more will be available in a subsequent meeting.

i. Review of Memorandum of Understanding Between SHPS and SHPD regarding SRO

Dr. McLaughlin discussed the document prepared as a result of meetings with the Chief of Police and DESE with regards to School Resource Officer (SRO). In their perspective, this document has been developed and bedded. The South Hadley Police Department feels confident in this document. Chief Gundersen made it clear that she and the police department want the schools to feel equal confidence, which Dr. McLaughlin appreciates as this is a partnership.

Dr. McLaughlin would like to thank Dr. Jackson Matos for providing questions or concerns that were submitted in the fall with regards to the SRO when this was first brought forth to the School Committee.

- Dr. McLaughlin addressed the request that the MOU containing language with regards to diversity, which can be found in the Mission Statement and other places throughout the SRO.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

“To foster a safe and supportive school environment that allows all students to learn and flourish regardless of race, religion, national origin, immigration status, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or socioeconomic status”

- The Chief was very clear that the following statement, “to minimize the number of students unnecessarily out of the classroom, arrested at school, or court-involved” remains one of the very important goals of the police department. They really want to partner with the School Department.

- In place of the strike through language on page 4, second bullet, which currently states:

“Demonstrated ability to work successfully with all populations of students regardless of ethnic makeup and language background ~~that has a similar racial and ethnic makeup and language background as those prevalent in the student body~~, as well as with persons with physical and mental disabilities, including persons with behavioral health challenges”

Dr. McLaughlin proposes that language would no longer be in the new policy, which might include an SRO that was sensitive to more specific language.

- The MOU specifically has to address the fact that the School District provides a dedicated space for the SRO to conduct their work. In South Hadley, Josh Helm’s is the SRO and he has designated space at South Hadley High School and Michael E. Smith Middle School. In addition, an office equipped with a door that closes for privacy, desk, phone, district issued computer, district issued email, district issued walkie-talkie, etc.
- In response to a question raised by the School Committee in the fall with regards to “Cultural competency clothing preference”, in conversation with the Chief, the reference to clothing preferences has to deal with professional development to help the SRO understand that perhaps in the case of wearing a hood wouldn’t be allowed but the wearing of a hijab would be clothing preference based on religion that certainly would and should be allowed. If there wasn’t professional development, that would specify that, then perhaps an SRO could misconstrue as something that could be prohibited, but with professional development would allow the SRO to recognize that distinction and note it not as an infraction worthy of any action.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

- Professional Development may be even better in discreet training that implicit bias might have on the actions that an SRO might take in connection to a student with whom they might not just fully identify or understand. Additional language has been provided in this section.
- The Bullying policy is driven by the State in large measure, certainly speaks to bullying in all its forms. This language allows for the teacher, administrator and/or administration, if the behavior happens that relates to anyone for whatever reason that does not specify. The Bullying policy does not prevent, in fact requires, that such behavior be addressed in the context of bullying and the training provided will assist in that process.

Dr. McLaughlin is not asking for any votes on the policies submitted tonight. He wanted to give some insight on what the Leadership Team and attorneys are working on at this moment and to give the School Committee a chance to vote on the revised policies in June.

Chairperson Matos appreciates those changes. After attending the Town Meeting there were community members who voiced their relationship with police. They know that in marginalized communities the relationship with police and police figures isn't always positive, so he thinks that it's important to do whatever we can to change that in any way that we can, and this seems like an area to start making gains in that area.

Lynda Pickbourn expressed her opinion about who would make a desirable SRO. She would argue for expanding and including a little bit more about competence and a broader category outside of ethnic and cultural makeup. Dr. McLaughlin responded that he doesn't want to overstep his bounds, but if Ms. Pickbourn has language that she would like to share with Chairperson Matos and himself, then the next step would be to provide it to the Police and a dialogue around that expansion.

Lynda Pickbourn had an additional question about what happens if a student has an interaction with an SRO while they're at school? Is there expectation that they would be able to have their parent or guardian there before that interaction? Dr. McLaughlin stated in general the answer is Yest, but depending on the particular involvement with the SRO there may be particular situations that would be emergent and dealt with in that moment. The ideal would be what you described and following an emergent situation, the parent should be communicated with as soon as possible and it is outlined in the MOU. The SRO is not the disciplinarian, that falls to the Principal or Administrator.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

j. Review of Student Attendance Policy

Dr. McLaughlin provided the current Student Absences and Excuses (JH)(See attached). He overviewed how the impact of COVID has changed many students' perception of their responsibilities as relates to attendance and the consequences of lack of attendance. During the COVID remote years, it was a game changer of what it meant to be in school. That has bled over into this first school year when we are fully back and the tendency of students to think we are still in that time, has had significant impact on their continuous attendance and their continuous learning and the impacts of that...

What constructive responses does this policy provide for these absences? Using some sort of payback, such as community service to equal one day absent = one hour community service in the school. (Just one example) If there's going to be consequences that would imply the loss of a privilege, they would need to be re-examined in the context of this policy. Our district is moving in the direction of trying to engage in the restorative practices, which are not a pass. It's just a different way to hold people accountable.

Vice Chair Schlachter has a question for the Administrator and staff at the schools about how they are seeing absences as a result of mental health and school avoidance due to mental health. She wonders what the state of those are and what we are doing to address those issues towards absence penalties. What's being done policy-wide to address mental or physical health. Dr. McLaughlin states that this topic has come up quite a bit in the Administrative weekly meetings. Using Street Data, which is important data, would tell us that there is a strong correlation between chronic absences and school phobias/school avoidance. When you ask what is being done at the policy level, that's part of the reason he is bringing this to the School Committee. There's a policy level and a practice level. The Practice Level is that they want to meet some of these mental health challenges by having a different approach towards some of these challenges, that's why he's discussing restorative practices. It gives a student a goal to help a student with their behavior that is educational, not punitive in order to improve.

Danielle Cooke asked about updating the last line of the policy with regards to 'instances of chronic illnesses' due to an illness where we would seek a doctor's note. She thinks if we are updating, it would be helpful to add disability or mental health and list a process of support for that student in that situation. She doesn't know if that means that absences are excused... but a reference to mark that chronic absenteeism that falls beneath the cracks would be something for them.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

k. Review of Use of Cell Phone Policy

Jennifer Voyik states that the district does not have a “specific” cell phone policy and the only language regarding cell phones for the district is just within the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy. Dr. McLaughlin does not believe that it was in this section, but he summarized what he shared with the attorney. There is a subsection in possibly the ‘Use of Technology’. He will look into it further. The issue is whether or not educators are allowed to entirely prohibit the use of cell phones in the classroom. If so, we would have to differentiate for students that will need them for medical purposes, like students that are diabetic or other medical conditions that would need immediate access to their doctor without or in combination of going to the nurse. There are occasions for medical purposes that a student would need a cell phone for medical purposes. That would need to be differentiated in a policy. However, the other item is that teachers are increasingly finding that the phone in the course of the instructional day is distracting. Many teachers would like to have a policy to have students place their cell phone in a protective case at the front of the classroom and deposit it there with exception to students that would be excused from doing that and get it at the end of the class. That would take away from the need of the teachers for it being on their person and potential damage. That specific component is being reviewed by the attorney as well.

Vice Chair Schlachter stated that in their school they call them “Phone Hotels” every classroom has almost a miniature shoe bag. The students slip their phone in the phone hotel and that’s even the way that some teachers take attendance because if the phone is there, the child is there. She thinks if they implement this policy, they should find the funds to purchase a phone hotel for each classroom that would be using it. She doesn’t know that’s the official name of it, but that’s the only way that it has been referred to in their school. Jennifer Voyik commented that it sounds great... like your phone is going on a little vacay.

Dr. McLaughlin stated that the phone is a tool, when it’s not used as a tool, it is a distraction from the learning environment. We need to develop a policy for the medical needs and the instructional needs of when it would be necessary to put it away.

Chairperson Matos noted that it also helps a teacher figure out who may or may not have a phone and may have to re-evaluate their curriculum if they don’t have access to their phones. Dr. McLaughlin agreed with that point that what we learned from COVID is that not everyone has access to technology.

Final comment, Danielle Cooke has heard them as called as “parking lots”

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

I. Review of Dress Code Policy

Dr. McLaughlin reviewed the Student Dress Code Policy (JICA)(See attached). The Administrative Team has asked for legal counsel on the extent to which they can define what is a disruption to the educational process. The implication of that is sometimes an individual teacher may invoke the policy based on a perception that they have that a piece of clothing is disruptive, which may conflict with another person's view. We will have to be very clear of what would be considered a disruption or remove that verbiage. This has been submitted to their attorney for further review. He asked for the School Committee's input or suggestions.

Vice Chair Schlachter stated that there are a lot more gender discrimination with these dress code rules. She suggests that students are not allowed to wear the hoods up on their sweatshirts in the school hallways for identification. Also, no clothing with hate symbols on them with a list of hate symbols, if necessary. Chairperson Matos stated that they would like to bring this policy to the Racial Justice Task Force as well. There was some discussion as to whether hate symbols should be specified as the list will frequently change. Vice Chair Schlachter stated that some things that may be disagreeable, may also be protected.

Dr. McLaughlin stated that it would be hard to keep up with things that are considered 'hateful' and if something is not specifically listed in the policy it could be proven that it was allowed. He plans to have more information during the next meeting. He will convey any thoughts to the attorney prior to the next meeting. The goal is to do it right, not rushed.

m. Memorandum of Understanding Concerning 2022-2023 School Calendar (vote)

Dr. Mark McLaughlin stated this MOA with regards to the school calendar that was approved earlier this year, express a couple of changes from the existing contract (see attached):

- Early Release Day
- School Year Calendar of 185 total contractual days

Nothing has changed with regards to the School Calendar, Important Dates or School Hours for 2022-2023 Academic Year.

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

There was a brief discussion with regards to the alternative School Committee Date in December. Vice Chair Allison Schlachter requested that it be removed from the dates. Chairperson stated that they can take it upon themselves to mention that there will be no alternative dates in December as was done in the past to avoid any extra work for others. Vice Chair Schlachter stated that she really appreciates the updated version of this information, it is user friendly. Danielle Cooke says it's prettier than what she has been used to over the past twenty (20) years.

Lynda Pickbourn requested clarification that this is different from the current contract and which is why it requires and approval. Dr. McLaughlin confirmed and clarified the differences.

Chairperson Matos entertained a motion to approve the MOU as presented as it relates to the 2022-2023 Academic Calendar, which was moved by Danielle Cooke and seconded by Eric Friesner. No further discussion. Motion passed: 5/0 (Schlachter, Cooke, Friesner, Pickbourn, and Matos).

Danielle Cooke asked if there was a brief discussion with regards to the final school dates from the State. Dr. McLaughlin stated the lack of response from the State may be an answer in itself.

There was a brief discussion about a Kids School Committee in the future.

Danielle Cooke also expressed the family of Ansleigh McDaniels would appreciate the attendance of the community at her funeral services this weekend.

VIII. Information Only

None.

IX. Unfinished Business

None.

X. New Business

None.

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2022

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

Chairperson Matos entertained a motion to adjourn Open Session, motion was moved by Allison Schlachter and seconded by Eric Friesner. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously: 5/0 (Schlachter, Cooke, Friesner, Pickbourn and Matos) With no further business to discuss, the School Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Stevenson
Executive Assistant, South Hadley Public Schools.

Reviewed and Approved by,
Allison Schlachter
Chairperson, South Hadley School Committee
Date: June 2, 2022