

SECTION A

FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS

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SECTION A
FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS

1. School District Legal Status (Voted 9/22/81; #81-431)

The legal basis for education in the Town of Brookline derives from the Constitution of Massachusetts, Chapter V, Section II; from Massachusetts statutes pertaining to education (See MASC's Selected General Laws, Constitution of Massachusetts); and from court interpretations of these laws and the powers implied in them.

The official name of the district shall be THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS. Brookline's public schools have been established under Chapter 71, Section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws which reads in part:

"every town shall maintain, for at least the number of days required by the Board of Education, in each school year...a sufficient number of schools for the instruction of all children who may legally attend a public school therein".

The Public Schools of Brookline, Massachusetts serve the Town of Brookline, which was incorporated in 1705. A street list which defines the territorial jurisdiction of the Public Schools of Brookline, and a map of the attendance areas are available in the Superintendent's office.

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2. Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) is guided by its Core Values: High Achievement for All, Excellence in Teaching, Collaboration, Respect for Human Differences, and Educational Equity.

Therefore, the PSB is committed to ensuring that it is free from discrimination in education and employment, and to ensuring equal opportunity in education and employment for all its students and employees.

It is the policy of the PSB that:

- a. No discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, disability, veteran status, or genetic information will exist in any one of the public schools, in employment, in the terms or conditions of employment, in screening candidates for employment, or in retention, benefits, and promotion.
- b. No otherwise qualified individual shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the PSB.
- c. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against with regard to admission to the PSB, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of the PSB, on account of his or her race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, disability, veteran status, or genetic information.

This policy shall apply to all persons affiliated with the PSB, including all staff, employees, contractors, suppliers of goods and services, and all students. It will be implemented under the PSB's policies on Diversity (Section A(5)) and Safe Schools (Sections G and J).

Originally approved: 3/28/77, #77-125; Revised 10/15/79, #79-381; 9/22/81, #81-431; 3/27/84, #84-121; 5/7/87, #87-186 & 8; 3/26/92, #92-99; 11/10/92, #92-464; 9/10/98, #98-82; 10/26/06, #06-97; 5/5/11, #11-40.

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3. *Workplace Safety (New Policy)*

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE
WORKPLACE SAFETY POLICY**

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APPENDIX A

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF RELATIONSHIPS IN WHICH THERE MAY BE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
 2. RESOURCES
- PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE
WORKPLACE SAFETY POLICY**

1. INTRODUCTION

A. Policy Statement

Workplace Safety is everyone's responsibility. The Public Schools of Brookline ("PSB") is committed to providing a safe workplace for all PSB employees. The PSB prohibits any type of workplace violence or threats of violence committed by or against employees. All employees are encouraged to report all conduct which could pose a threat to themselves or their co-workers. This Policy is being implemented to improve workplace safety and to provide some assistance to victims of violence. However, the PSB cannot insure safety and employees cannot rely upon this Policy to protect their safety. Employees are reminded to be careful, observant of all safety rules and practices and vigilant for themselves and others. It is the obligation of all PSB employees to work with the PSB to implement this Policy.

B. Support for Victims of Violence

The PSB recognizes that all forms of violence and threats of violence directed at employees, including domestic violence, regardless of whether or not an actual incident occurs at work, have an impact upon the workplace. Where possible, the PSB is committed to providing appropriate support and assistance, as outlined in this policy, to employees who are victims of violence. The PSB does not discriminate in employment based on an employee's status as a victim of domestic violence or other types of violence.

C. Distribution, Posting and Training

To improve workplace safety and to reduce the risk of violence, all employees should review and understand all provisions of the Workplace Safety Policy ("the Policy"). All employees will be provided with a copy of the Policy upon adoption. The PSB will also distribute the Policy to each new employee at the time of his/her orientation. All Administrators and supervisors will receive a copy of the Policy and will be required to attend a training program(s) concerning its implementation. The PSB will post information about the Policy in work areas, on PSB message boards, the Town's Intranet, and in the PSB Human Resources Department.

D. Collective Bargaining Agreements

This policy does not modify or supersede the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreements.

E. Scope of Coverage

This policy applies to all persons employed by the PSB/School Department including represented and unrepresented employees, and to volunteers, interns, and, where applicable, to appointed and elected officials of the Town of Brookline, collectively referred to as "employees" herein.

2. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

A. Definition of Prohibited Conduct

PSB Employees are prohibited from engaging in any conduct at work or on any property owned or controlled by PSB that is intended to cause physical injury to another or to cause another reasonably to be placed in fear for his/her physical safety. This includes, but is not limited to: actually causing physical injury to another person, making threatening remarks about causing physical injury to another person, engaging in aggressive or hostile behavior that creates reasonable fear of injury to another person or

intentionally damaging employer property or another person's property. Other prohibited conduct includes using PSB equipment such as telephones, e-mail, mail system, facsimile machine, copy machine, vehicles, or other equipment and resources for the purpose of causing physical injury to another or causing another reasonably to be placed in fear for his/her physical safety.

B. Enforcement

In addition to violating this Policy, prohibited conduct may also constitute violations of the PSB's Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Information Technology Resources Policy and state and/or federal law. Prohibited conduct may subject the perpetrator to criminal prosecution and/or civil liability. The PSB considers acts of violence and threats of violence by an employee while on duty or while on PSB property to constitute just cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination. The PSB also considers off-duty criminal conduct that perpetrates domestic violence, or other forms of violence, upon an individual, as incompatible with public service.

3. REPORTING PROCEDURES

A. Reporting and Investigation

Any employee who perceives an imminent threat to any person's physical safety should call 911 and notify his/her supervisor and the PSB Human Resources Director as soon as practicable. In non-emergency situations, any employee, who reasonably believes a violation of the Policy has occurred, or reasonably may occur, shall, as soon as practicable, report the violation/potential violation to his/her supervisor. Any supervisor who receives a report or has first-hand knowledge that a violation of this Policy has occurred, or reasonably may occur, shall, as soon as practicable, report this to the PSB Human Resources Director, who, shall report the violation/potential violation to the Brookline Police Department.

Any incident that may reasonably be considered a violation of this Policy will be investigated. The PSB Human Resources Director, and the Brookline Police Department, when necessary, will make a determination as to the most appropriate party to conduct the investigation and the manner and extent to which any such investigation will be conducted. This Policy notwithstanding, the PSB is not obligated to undertake any specific type or scope of investigation.

B. Reporting of Domestic Violence and Threats of Domestic Violence

In the case of Domestic Violence, in addition to the reporting requirements in 3.A. above, the supervisor must contact the Brookline Police Department Domestic Violence Unit and the Human Resources Director.

C. Documentation

A supervisor or his designee shall document, in summary form, any report of a violation of this Policy and any steps taken in response thereto.

D. Confidentiality

Reports of incidents or information that warrants confidentiality will be disclosed to others on a need-to-know basis. If an investigation ensues, all employees directly involved will be contacted, and the results of investigations may be discussed with the affected parties as the PSB Human Resources Director and/or Police Department deems appropriate.

4. RISK REDUCTION MEASURES

A. Hiring

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that employers file for and review the criminal records of all applicants for positions that may have unsupervised contact with children. The PSB Human Resources Department will request such information from the Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information Board and will review the information that is provided in response to this information request in accordance with state law and the PSB CORI Policy.

B. Prohibition Against Weapons in the Workplace

Employees shall not carry or have within their possession or control any type of firearm or dangerous weapon while (1) working for the PSB or acting within the scope of their employment with the PSB, (2) while on property owned or controlled by the PSB at any time, or (3) at any event sponsored by the PSB, whether or not the employee is acting within the scope of his or her employment/assignment/position unless written permission is obtained, in advance, with regard to the specific hand gun, firearm, or weapon, from the Chief of Police after consultation with the employee's supervisor and provided such employee has the required license. This provision does not apply to tools or implements that have been issued to an employee by the Town for purpose of the employee carrying out his/her job duties. If there is any doubt about the application of this section, the Employee is directed to discuss the matter with his or her supervisor.

C. Safety Assessment

The Building Department, in consultation with the Brookline Police Department, will, as they deem necessary, conduct inspections of the premises to evaluate and determine any vulnerability to workplace violence or hazards. The Fire Department, in consultation with the Building Department, will conduct periodic evacuation drills of all public buildings and will prominently post emergency evacuation procedures. The Information Technology Department will to the extent practicable take reasonable steps to ensure that all town telephone lines have access to the Emergency 911 System.

D. Individual Assessment

The PSB does not expect employees to be skilled in identifying potentially dangerous persons or situations. However, Administrators, supervisors, and all other employees are expected to exercise good and reasonable judgment and vigilance in aiding the PSB with the enforcement of this Policy. Employees should pay special attention to the following behaviors:

- Discussing the use of weapons on others or bringing weapons to the workplace without authorization.
- Displaying overt and/or uncharacteristic signs of extreme stress, resentment and/or hostility that could lead a reasonable person to believe the individual will engage in unlawful violent behavior.
- Making serious threatening remarks about other employees, officials, family members, or groups of people that could lead a reasonable person to believe the individual will engage in unlawful violent behavior.
- Displaying seriously irrational or inappropriate behavior that could lead a reasonable person to believe the individual will engage in unlawful violent behavior.

E. Mail Handling Safety

During times of heightened security, or when the PSB is aware of any specific concern, the Brookline Health Department may provide employees with specific instruction about precautionary measures for the safe handling of in-coming mail. Examples of basic precautionary steps for handling mail are: wear protective gloves; examine the mail before opening and distributing it; open mail carefully using tools such as letter openers; and wash your hands with soap and water after handling the mail. Other precautions may include wearing respiratory protection. At certain times, current events may result in employees feeling anxious about handling incoming mail despite the fact that there maybe no reasonable basis for believing that such activity will be dangerous. While the PSB will not dismiss an individual employee's concern regarding this matter, unless the PSB determines that there is a reasonable basis to be concerned, employees whose jobs require them to open mail are expected to continue doing so unless otherwise directed by the PSB. However, employees may choose to employ any of the precautionary measures outlined above at any time. If an employee has any questions about safe mail handling procedures he/she should contact the Director of Public Health and request a copy of the specific procedures that have been developed by the Health Department regarding this matter.

F. Threatening Phone Calls or Letters

Based on past experience, it is extremely unlikely that any employee will receive a threatening phone call or letter about a planned violent or hazardous act. However, if an employee were to receive a threatening call, he/she should record the caller ID phone number, if possible; immediately call 911; and immediately inform the supervisor or PSB Human Resources Director. The Brookline Police Department has developed a Bomb Threat Information Card. Each employee, who has a telephone at his/her worksite, should have a copy of the card within the immediate vicinity of his/her phone. If an employee were to receive a threatening letter he/she should immediately contact his/her supervisor or the PSB Human Resources Director, both of whom would have been instructed on crisis protocols.

5. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A. Definition

Domestic violence is physical abuse or the placing a person in reasonable fear for his/her physical safety or integrity committed by someone who is or has been in a family, domestic, social, or dating relationship against one or more persons in that relationship. Most often, it is intended to establish and maintain control over a partner. For the purposes of this policy, the following are examples of domestic violence: (1) attempting to cause or causing physical harm; (2) placing another in fear of imminent serious physical harm; (3) causing another to engage involuntarily in sexual relations by force, threat or duress or engaging or threatening to engage in sexual activity with a dependent/minor child;(4) engaging in threats, intimidation or acts designed to induce terror; (5) depriving another of medical care, housing (without a court order), food or other necessities of life; and (6) restraining the liberty of another without a court order. Domestic violence can occur in any racial, economic, educational, religious, and cultural background, in heterosexual and same sex relationships, between people living together or separately, married or unmarried, in short-term or long-term relationships. Domestic violence is a major cause of injury to women, although men also may be victims of domestic violence. Characteristics to look for which may indicate the existence of domestic violence in a relationship are provided in the Appendix A (1) of this policy.

B. Support and Assistance

The PSB strongly encourages any person who believes that he/she is a victim of domestic violence to contact his/her local police department and to get a restraining order against the perpetrator from a court and to include the address of his/her place of work in the restraining order. Remember, domestic violence includes being placed in reasonable fear for one's physical safety (assault) as well as actual physical harm or unwanted touching (battery). The PSB also strongly encourages any employee who has received a restraining order to immediately contact the Town of Brookline Police Department, Domestic Violence Unit at (617) 730-2247. The Town may be able to help enforce civil protection orders (i.e., restraining orders or no-contact orders or judgments) of which it has knowledge. In certain circumstances the PSB may also file a civil "No Trespass" order against the perpetrator, or potential perpetrator. The Domestic Violence Unit is available to assist all PSB employees who have concerns about domestic violence, regardless of whether or not the employee, or the perpetrator, is a resident of the Town. Additionally, the PSB strongly encourages any employee who believes that he/she is a victim of domestic violence to contact the resources listed in Appendix A (2), and/or any of the following individuals: the employee's supervisor, the Human Resources Director, or the Coordinator of Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention in the Health Department. Once the PSB is aware that an employee is alleged to have been the victim of violence or threat of violence including domestic violence, the PSB may be able to provide the types of assistance that are listed below. In some circumstances the PSB may not be able to provide one or more of these types of assistance, but the PSB will make good faith efforts to develop a plan which allows the employee to continue to perform all of the essential functions of his/her job, while at the same time providing the flexibility for the employee to take the necessary actions to provide for his/her safety and that of his/her family.

C. Types of Support

Examples of potential types of assistance include:

(1) Resource and Referral Information

Appendix A of this policy lists a range of resources that are available to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. The Human Resources Department will periodically review this list of resources to update contact numbers and list additional resources that may become available.

(2) Temporary Adjustment to Worksite or Work Location

An employee and his/her supervisor, in consultation with the Brookline Police Department, may determine that it is necessary to make temporary adjustments to the employee's worksite or work location. These temporary adjustments may include redirecting certain incoming mail, email, facsimiles, or other modification to decrease an alleged perpetrator's ability to contact the employee at work. In certain circumstances this temporary adjustment may include relocating the employee's worksite in an effort to decrease the likelihood that the employee may come in contact with the alleged perpetrator. Where possible, the PSB, upon recommendation of the Police Department, may be able to take additional measures to increase the employee's workplace security. Depending on the nature of a recommended temporary adjustment, the PSB may need to consult and/or negotiate with the employee's union. Remember, while the PSB will take reasonable steps to protect its employees, it cannot guarantee safety. Employees must also take reasonable steps to protect their own safety.

(3) Increase Awareness of Potential Threat

In cases where an employee has obtained a restraining order from a court, the Supervisor and/or PSB Human Resources Director, in consultation with the employee and the Brookline Police Department may determine that certain steps need to be taken to increase the awareness of other employees, and/or police officers, that an employee may be at risk of violence in the workplace. These steps may be taken if they are necessary, in the opinion of the PSB, for the employee's safety and/or the safety of the employee's co-workers.

(4) Scheduling of Leave and Adjustment of Work Schedule

An employee may request leave and/or an adjustment in his/her work schedule to address issues related to his/her own personal safety and the safety of the employee's family. The supervisor, in consultation with the PSB Human Resources Director, shall determine whether to authorize leave and/or make an adjustment to the employee's work schedule after considering the needs of the employee and the operations of the department and after consultation with the union where applicable and required. Use of paid leave must be consistent with the purpose for which such leave is provided in any applicable collective bargaining agreement. The Human Resources Director will advise the employee if he/she is or may be eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act or the Small Necessities Leave Act. When an employee is required to attend a court or other legal proceeding in connection with being the victim of violence, and the employee has exhausted all available vacation and personal leave, the employee will, consistent with the needs of the PSB, be provided with reasonable unpaid leave for the purpose of attending the court or legal proceeding. To be eligible for such leave, the employee must provide the PSB with as much prior notice of the employee's need for such leave as is practicable under the circumstances.

**Source: Town of Brookline Workplace Safety Policy, February 2004
New Policy Adopted by the Brookline School Committee: 12.7.06, # 06-107**

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4. *Statement on Diversity* (Voted 3/19/91, #91-84)

The Brookline Public Schools reflect and nurture both the diversity and the commonality of values within our community. The schools welcome and respect the diverse ideas, culture and heritage of Brookline's citizens and teachers. Recognizing that learning thrives in an atmosphere of open debate, we encourage the expression of a wide variety of opinions, supported by evidence and logical proof.

The hallmark of the Brookline Public Schools continues to be a commitment to academic excellence through a dedicated, creative, and independent teaching staff and a concerned parent community. Parents are encouraged to learn about the operation of the schools, to raise questions about what is being taught, and to share their views.

Sensitivity to others, willingness to explore and respect differing points of view, kindness, and humility in expressing judgment are all essential ingredients for maintaining a climate of mutual respect in which learning can thrive. All individuals associated with the Brookline Public Schools--students, staff, teachers, and parents--will continue to work consistently towards these goals.

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5. Overall Philosophy and Mission

(Voted 4/6/81, #81-115; 9/22/81, #81-431; 12/22/92, #92-516)

The Brookline Public Schools exist to educate each child to become a responsible adult capable of contributing to the quality of life in a free and changing society. The school shares responsibility for this development of children with the family, church or synagogue, and other community institutions. Although the content and instructional form of the educational experience change as appropriate, from kindergarten through high school, all of our schools share the core values of high academic achievement, excellence in teaching, collaborative relationships, and respect for human differences. As they challenge all students to achieve their fullest intellectual and social development, and share increasingly the responsibility for learning, all of our schools have the following common and continuing goals:

1. To stimulate a spirit of inquiry and love of learning that will remain with each personal throughout life.

Schools should provide the context for developing inquisitive minds and a curiosity about the world. They are the place for helping students to develop an appreciation for all cultures and the arts--visual, performing, applied, and industrial.

2. To master skills in all areas of learning.

At the completion of high school, our children should be literate and should possess a variety of skills needed for the development and communication of ideas. Among these skills are reading, writing, reasoning, speaking, listening, observing, analyzing, using the computer, and performing mathematical calculations. The acquisition of these skills is designed to enhance each student's capacity for effective functioning in the school, the larger community, and in life.

3. To develop the qualities of responsible citizenship.

Schools should prepare students to become, as adults, informed and active participants in their government. To this end, the schools should provide courses in history and government and encourage participation in student government activities.

4. To explore the limits of one's potential.

It is recognized that individuals can develop only so far as natural ability and the environment will permit. Nevertheless, schools should challenge each student to reach his/her fullest potential.

5. To understand and accept the consequences of one's actions upon oneself, others, and society in general by developing a sense of morality and ethics.

Schools should provide the experience to help students develop a sense of right and wrong.

6. To develop a sense of personal responsibility and an appreciation of, and respect for, the rights of others.

Schools must demonstrate their commitment to human relations by teaching students about individual/cultural/racial similarities and differences.

7. To gain knowledge about one's physical and social self in relation to one's total environment.

Schools should encourage students to develop a proper respect for one's own physical fitness, sexuality, and emotional development.

With the systematic attainment of these vital goals, the personal and intellectual growth of all our children will be enhanced, and they will leave the Brookline Public School system ready to confront the next stage of their development as responsible citizens of the world.

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6. Parental and Early Childhood Education (Voted 4/6/81, #81-116; 9/22/81, #81-431)

Schools that recognize the value of extending their efforts to the family and to the earliest years of the child's life can enhance the learning of children and the well-being of the community. This conviction is based on the work of the Brookline Early Education Project and on a substantial body of related research on child development.

Clearly, certain conditions in the first five years of life influence healthy development and success in school. Preventive health care which monitors all areas of the child's development helps reduce the need for later, costly remediation. Consistent opportunities for children to listen to and speak with nurturing adults, especially during the first three years of life, facilitate optimal language and cognitive development. Opportunities orchestrated for the child to practice and master a range of skills--problem solving, perceptual, motor, and social--encourage motivation for self-directed learning and enable children both to esteem themselves and to respect the rights and dignity of others.

Parents are better able to assume responsibility for their child's success in school if they feel confident in their own abilities to contribute to their child's learning and to the school and community. Information pertaining to child development, plus support for the child-rearing role from other adults increase parents' willingness to participate actively.

Especially in stringent economic times, if some of the school system's investments to prepare children for success in school and toward building a strong constituency of parents, cost-effective benefits will be realized. Further, if the capabilities of other public and private agencies, such as health care providers, mental health agencies, libraries, day care and nursery schools, colleges and universities, private employers and state agencies are fully and systematically enlisted by the schools, the resources available to enhance children's learning will be increased, despite imminent reductions in tax-based expenditures for public education.

A high quality of education for young children, involving partnership relations between schools and parents, as well as full utilization of community resources, is the best insurance policy available to a community that is concerned with realizing a high quality of life for all its citizens.

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7. *The Philosophy of Brookline High School*

(Voted 6/26/90, #90-268; 6/15/70, #70-295; 9/22/81, #81-431; 11/16/81, #81-502)

At Brookline High School, we seek excellence in a community of learning, rich in academic and social objectives.

Excellence has many strands that thread every stage of the learning and teaching process. We want to encourage individual thinking and love of learning, pursue excellence in our various disciplines and programs, contribute to the growth and development of our students, embrace ideals of social awareness and action, and secure our health and integrity as a community of learning.

We are proud of the diversity we find in our students, teachers, and staff, and celebrate the value of mutual respect and caring. We intend to cultivate an understanding of differences--racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, cultural, political, and economic--and an appreciation of our essential kinship. Realizing that diversity can bring conflict, we are committed to open and democratic means of resolving our differences. Further, we believe that our commitment both to excellence and to respect for diversity provides the foundation for a good education. Relationships must be forged and curriculum designed to reflect and reinforce these academic and social values.

We want our school, then, to be a community of respect and a haven for learning. We want our students to be apprenticed to life in its ideal form--life that is devoted to inquiry, guided by reason and compassion, touched by beauty and joy, and informed by justice. We want our graduates to become literate about a full array of human achievement so that they will know and value what it means to do anything well.

With this philosophy in mind, our goals are as follow:

1. To provide challenging courses that will give each student a solid foundation in the academic disciplines, and the opportunity to pursue broad areas of interest.
2. To strive for acceptance of and appreciation for the diversity of our school population, with respect and care for each other, individually and as members of different groups.
3. To help students develop creativity, rational thinking, eagerness for discovery, and a sense of the aesthetic.
4. To nurture integrity and self-esteem in our community.
5. To encourage rigor and risk-taking in learning and teaching.
6. To support curricular, instructional, and administrative exploration, growth, and review.
7. To emphasize a global and multicultural perspective in our curriculum.

8. To hold ourselves and each other accountable for excellence.
9. To develop school and community spirit.
10. To encourage active participation in school activities, clubs and governance.
11. To provide an environment that is safe, healthy, clean, pleasant, and conducive to learning.
12. To prepare our students to make informed decisions, as individuals and in relation to others.

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8. District and Administrative Goals and Objectives

(Voted 6/14/78, #78-214; 9/22/81, #81-431, 11/16/81, #81-509)

On an annual basis, the Brookline School Committee shall, through an ad hoc committee appointed by the Chairman of the School Committee, and with the assistance of the Superintendent of Schools, set annual and long-range goals and objectives for the school system.

At a regular School Committee meeting to be held no later than June 30, the Superintendent shall submit to the School Committee these developed goals for the following academic year.

Additionally, the Superintendent shall report to the School Committee at an annual public meeting the progress made on the goals and objectives set for the previous year. (See Policy on Superintendent's Evaluation, Section G.)

(This statement of goals, and progress report on goals, is often incorporated into the Budget Process, and may be found as part of the budget document.)

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9. *Wellness Policy* (Voted: 9/28/06, #06-88; 12/7/17, #17-102; 6/19/18, #18-60)

(Note: policy was moved from PSB Policy Manual Section E: Support Services to Section A: Foundations and Basic Commitments 6/19/18)

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children’s health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The PSB supports a healthy environment where children learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. In an effort to support these goals, the following *core values* guide this policy and its corresponding implementation and procedures:

Cultivate a School Culture That Values Wellness – physical and mental health of all its students and their communities – by offering thoughtful, inclusive, and appropriate support and instruction throughout all schools.

Provide Comprehensive health education including but not limited to mental and physical health, nutrition and food literacy, physical activity, allergy and public health concerns, alcohol and other substance abuse, peer pressure, body image, and eating disorders. At its very core, comprehensive school health education is about keeping students healthy now and in the future, reinforcing positive healthy behaviors throughout the school day, and making it clear that good health and learning go hand in hand.

Destigmatize Differences due to mental and physical health or disability, culture, race, religion, language, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status through providing space for public learning, conversation, and discussion.

I. Food Available in School

The PSB addresses guidelines for students who have life threatening food allergies within the management guidelines for students who have life-threatening allergies.

The PSB provides school food environments in which every food option meets or exceeds USDA guidelines. The PSB will provide choices which support good health, academic achievement, physical activity, and individual choice. In providing foods that promote good health, pleasure in eating and reinforce important health education objectives, the PSB will allow for a diversity in family resources, food knowledge, exposure, cultures, and food practices.

Student Access and Participation in Meal Programs

1. The PSB is committed to provide a stigma-free meal environment where all students are provided fresh, nutritious foods that support physical growth and learning. Specifically, free and reduced priced meals will be served and sold in a manner indistinguishable by students or staff from the regularly priced meals.

2. PSB will meet or exceed best administrative practices for enrollment, participation, and payment of food, including:
 - a. Ensuring that the direct certification process is being complied with for automatically eligible students;
 - b. On a regular basis checking and coordinating with county social services and similar public benefit administering agencies to ensure that every eligible child is enrolled in free/reduced price meal programs;
 - c. Developing a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan directed at both students and families, including a language access component to ensure language-appropriate documents and highlighting access options for students with disabilities.
 - d. Implementing and maintaining pin numbers or similar payment system in place that eliminates the stigma of accepting “free/reduced” lunch.
 - e. Ensuring at least 20 minutes of time to eat *after food is served*, as feasible. This will allow enough time for students to get their lunch and eat it. Students need to socialize while eating, and if forced to choose due to shortness of time will usually respond to social prompts to talk rather than eat.
 - f. Accommodate special dietary needs and offer foods that permit individual choice.
 - g. Striving to reflect the ethnic and cultural preferences represented within our diverse community.

School Meal Content Guidelines

The PSB adheres to the following School Meal Content Guidelines

- a. Meet and, when possible, exceeds the Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf> and the Massachusetts and USDA Competitive Foods and Beverage Nutrition Standards
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/community-health/mass-in-motion/school/nutrition-regs/> taking advantage of exemptions for unprocessed fruits and vegetables. To the extent that current nutrition science indicates a higher standard is the better practice, the higher standard should be applied. The PSB endeavors to use organic food that is sourced locally and regionally when available.
 - i. Under the Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast program (7 CFR Parts 210 and 220) guidelines;
 1. This rule requires the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat free and low-fat fluid milk in school meals; reduce the levels of sodium and saturated fat and meet the nutritional needs of school children within their calorie requirements. These improvements to the school meal programs, largely based on recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, are expected to enhance the diet and health of school children, and help mitigate the childhood obesity trend.
 2. Trans fats are not permitted.

- b. Serves real, minimally processed food without additives when budgetarily possible and available. Fresh and freshly prepared food options should be available to every student at every meal.
- c. Makes ingredient, nutrition and allergy information for all foods and beverages, except for fresh fruits and vegetables and other whole foods, readily available to students before purchasing meals, and to families in advance of the school day.

Snacks offered or sold to students as part of the food service program or through vending machines will comply with Smart Snacks or Massachusetts DESE snack standards per regulations 7 CFR 210.11 105 CMR 225.000. Snacks sold through vending machines shall not compete with meals offered by the school food service program.

Fundraisers should promote physical activity and health enhancing eating habits. The sale of items that meet the guidance provided by MA Dept of Health and Human Services for school nutrition shall be encouraged before, during, and up to 30 minutes after school.

Food at School Events, Field Trips, Celebrations, and Fundraisers

- a. Given the implicit school endorsement, foods offered at any school events (including testing days, assemblies, etc.) will be wholesome, nutritious, clearly marked for the eight (8) common allergens (peanut, tree nut, milk, soy, egg, wheat, fish, and shellfish), and meet or exceed the district's nutrition standards for food in school set forth above.
- b. Food fundraisers or food sold on behalf of the schools will also feature whole or minimally processed high nutrient foods, such as fruits, and vegetables, and be consistent with the standards and objectives of the wellness policy while being in accordance with National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (7 CFR Parts 210 and 220).
- c. Non-food related fundraising alternatives such as walk- or read-a-thons, jump roping, fun runs, or programming competitions, should be promoted.
- d. Lunch time meetings will not be used as a consequence. Tutoring, clubs, and meetings may take place during lunch time if students are provided with the opportunity to get lunch.

Competitive Foods and Beverages & Food Marketing

- a. Foods should compare favorably with meal program offerings, and meet or exceed the same standards set forth above.
- b. These standards apply in all locations where food and beverages are offered or sold in schools: cafeterias, restaurants, student run culinary program, cafes, vending machines, stores, and snack or other food carts.
- c. Only foods that meet or exceed district standards may be marketed or promoted to students.
- d. PSB will prioritize marketing whole or minimally processed foods to students.
- e. Fruit and non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale wherever food is sold.
- f. Only Office of Administration and Finance approved brand names, trademarks, or logos from companies that offer only product lines (both in

and outside of schools) that are consistent with the Wellness Policy nutrition guidelines will appear in schools, during school activities, or in school materials, including, but not limited to curriculum or educational materials, food and beverage containers, menus, school publications, posters, electronic media, or vending machines.

Ensure the safety and inclusion of students with food allergies and other special health concerns by following the PSB Management Guidelines for Students who have Life-Threatening Allergies.

II. Nutrition Education

The PSB will aim to provide nutrition, health and food literacy education to students at every grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based health education curriculum and/or as embedding in multi-disciplinary units that meets state and national standards. Curriculum will be selected, developed and coordinated so that both dedicated health and nutrition units as well as other classroom and non-classroom settings are used in concert to further this goal. Appropriately, the district will take steps to ensure trained and dually licensed physical and health educators will be identified and tasked with this coordination with appropriate content area partners. The K-12 coordinator of Physical Education and Health will partner with appropriate content coordinators to prepare materials, conduct or arrange for outreach and trainings, and providing technical support and resources to teachers.

Consistent with the values set forth in this policy, the PSB will:

1. **Provide a food-positive school food environment**, in which real food is freshly prepared from whole or minimally processed ingredients to maximize naturally occurring nutrients and good taste while minimizing unnecessary additives and waste, whether in a meal program or any other school setting.
2. **Teach students to be critical, astute consumers** who know how to navigate both their food environment and their health support system, seek out current science, and modify their behavior to cultivate good health.
3. **Teach food literacy** in the classroom, in experiential learning settings like school gardens and teaching kitchens, in the cafeteria, and in other food settings; practice what is preached in nutrition education; and ensure that adults model good choices throughout schools.
4. **Provide a range of wholesome, nutritious, and delicious breakfast, lunch, snack and special event foods to all students.** While holding its food service program to the Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf> and the Massachusetts and USDA Competitive Foods and Beverage Nutrition Standards <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/community-health/mass-in-motion/school/nutrition> regs, the PSB will ensure that its foods are equally accessible to all students irrespective of ability to pay; consistent with the health, ethnic, and cultural needs of the internal school community; and contribute to the health of the greater community by supporting a healthy, sustainable, and fair local and regional food system.

III. Health Education, Physical Education and Physical Activity

The Public Schools of Brookline will provide a range of physical activity opportunities to all students, including regular physical education, daily recess and physical activity breaks, before and after school activities, active academics as well as comprehensive health education.

Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, push-ups) or withhold opportunities for physical education or physical activity (*e.g.*, recess) as consequence. The denial of recess will not be used as punishment/discipline unless the student's removal from recess has been determined as appropriate by the school principal and communicated with the parent.

1. Physical Education

- a. All PSB students grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in in-district alternative educational settings, receive physical education each year. In grades 9-12 this requirement may be met through the After-School Contract for Health and Fitness.
- b. All physical education will be taught by teachers meeting DESE licensure requirements. Age, ability, and developmentally appropriate modifications will be made to accommodate the needs of all students. Students will spend at least 70 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- c. Teachers will provide a comfortable and safe learning environment. Physical education equipment will be age and developmentally appropriate.

2. Daily Recess

- a. All children in grades kindergarten through five attending public schools shall receive one hundred forty minutes of supervised, safe, and unstructured free-play recess each week, preferably outdoors, weather permitting dependent at the discretion of the school principal. Should the outdoor temperature fall below 20 degrees, recess shall occur indoors.
- b. All children in grades 6 through 8 will receive at least 90 minutes of supervised, safe, and unstructured free-play recess each week, preferably outdoors, weather permitting at the discretion of the school principal. Should the outdoor temperature fall below 20 degrees, recess shall occur indoors.
 - i. As used herein, the term "free play" means an unstructured environment, but which is supervised by appropriate school personnel or staff.

3. Integrating Movement throughout the School Day

- a. The PSB will continue to train teachers in current practices to understand that short exercise bursts create increased brain activity, resulting in students who are more focused and ready to learn. Classroom teachers will be provided with resources for increasing student heart rates periodically throughout the school day.

- b. Students in grades 5-8 will have access to extramural sports programs. High school students will have access to intramural physical activity programs as well as interscholastic sports programs.
- c. All schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of students, inclusive of genders, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

4. Health Education

- a. PSB are committed to providing a school environment that promotes students' physical, emotional, intellectual, and social well-being.
- b. The health education program will utilize a skills-based approach designed to provide students with opportunities to develop and maintain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to be healthy and physically active for a lifetime. The health education curricula will be aligned with the state and National Health Education Standards. The PSB Health education shall be taught by teachers meeting DESE licensure requirements. Currently, the health curriculum is taught in grades 7-9. The PSB aims to start a specific health education program beginning in grade 6.

IV. Social and Emotional Health and Wellbeing

The Public Schools of Brookline is committed to promoting the social and emotional well-being of all students. Brookline's commitment to addressing student mental health has six objectives:

1. Foster a school **culture of overall acceptance and respect** for differences. De-stigmatize mental health issues, whether referring to individuals with clinical diagnoses (such as anxiety or bipolar disorder) or those struggling with personal or family stresses or other social/emotional issues. Create an environment in which it is safe and acceptable to talk about differences and ask for help.
2. **Provide age-appropriate social and emotional literacy and education.** Teach effective strategies and practices to support mental health, resilience and well-being throughout all grades, including skills that promote healthy behaviors in relation to nutrition, exercise, interpersonal relationships, stress management, mindfulness, injury prevention and substance abuse.
3. **Raise awareness among students, parents, schools staff, coaches and other members of the community** about the signs and symptoms of mental health, social/emotional issues, and substance abuse, keeping in mind that many behavioral and academic struggles, are often manifestations of compromised mental health or personal or family and stresses. Provide training on how to reach out to students and help them access support and treatment services. Ensure that all school staff are trained on emergency procedures, including when to report concerns to administration and support staff.
4. **Ensure that in-school support services** (including guidance, social workers, adjustment counselors, psychologists, and/or nursing staff) are accessible to all students presenting with social, emotional, mental health and substance abuse

issues for screening, referral and ongoing counseling in school counseling as needed. Trained licensed clinical staff will be available to respond to social service and psychiatric emergencies during school hours.

5. **Provide specialized instructional programs** for all students struggling with social and emotional issues to achieve academically to the best of their abilities.
6. **Promote wellbeing and balance** by addressing the policies and practices around the intersection of academic expectations/achievement and student mental health.

LEGAL AUTHORITIES: 7 CFR Parts 210 and 210; 105 CMR 225.

SECTION A
FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS

10. Commitment to Accomplishment (Voted 9/22/81, #81-431)

The Brookline School Committee is committed to continuing a long-standing tradition of excellence in its school system. Historically, Brookline was the first to provide such programs as kindergarten, hot lunches, physical education and others. Currently, Brookline is committed to sophisticated programs for special needs children, an expanded and flexible High School curriculum, extensive programs for independent study and individualized instruction.

Our school system must not stand still. Continually we must be responsive to children's needs and continually we must evaluate and assess the relevance and usefulness of existing programs.