

Freeport Union Free School District  
Freeport, New York

## Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting of July 16, 2003

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Freeport Union Free School District was held on Wednesday July 16, 2003 in the Board Room of the Administration Building, 235 North Ocean Avenue, Freeport, New York. Dr. Joseph Cattano called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Those present were:

- Dr. Joseph Cattano, Vice President
- Mr. Michael Raab, Trustee
- Ms. Carmen Piñeyro, Trustee
- Absent was: Ms. Sunday F. Coward, President
- Mr. Ronald Ellerbe, Trustee

Also present:

- Dr. Eric Eversley, Superintendent of Schools
- Dr. Mary Bediako, Assistant Superintendent for

Personnel & Clerk of the Board

- Dr. Joshua Starr, Executive Director of Operations

Absent was:

- Mr. Kishore Kuncham, Assistant Superintendent for Business
- Mr. Robert Harris, Executive Director for Curriculum, School Improvement, Professional Development and Planning

Guests were:

- none

There were 5 members of the public present at the opening of the meeting.

## **Executive Session**

At 7:35 p.m. it was moved by Mr. Raab to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a particular matter of personnel. The motion was seconded by Ms. Piñeyro and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro, and Raab.

At 7:38 p.m. it was moved by Mr. Raab to adjourn back to public session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Piñeyro and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro, and Raab.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Eversley, Superintendent of Schools, discussed the proposed revised Student Attendance Policy with the Board.

The Superintendent also discussed the issue of a closed campus at Freeport High School with the Board.

## **Questions from the Public**

The public was then given the opportunity to address the Board of Education. Each speaker was allowed to address the Board for six minutes on the items for action. The Board and administration addressed the comments from the public.

## **Items for Action**

### **Approval of CSE and PSE Meetings**

Ms. Piñeyro offered the following resolution for adoption: Piñeyro

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby accepts the minutes of the meetings of the committees on Special Education and Preschool Special Education for the following dates:

- May 21, 2003;
- June 6, 2003;
- June 12, 2003;
- June 13, 2003;
- June 18, 2003;
- June 25, 2003; and,
- June 26, 2003.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Raab and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro and Raab.

### **Adoption of the Revised Student Attendance Policy**

On a motion by Mr. Raab the following motion was adopted: ***BE IT RESOLVED*** by the Board of Education of the Freeport Union Free School District that the proposed Revised Student Attendance Policy is hereby adopted (as follows).

- Policy 5100/5110/5130/5140/5150/5170

---

## Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy

### *Statement of Overall Objectives*

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. All school age children residing within the Freeport Union Free School District are eligible to attend Freeport Schools. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (all are referred to in this policy as “ATEDs”), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance record keeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs, develop effective intervention strategies, and communicate with parents to improve school attendance.

Good attendance is an essential ingredient for academic success. Any absence from class is detrimental to the learning process. Classroom lessons foster and require social interaction, development of effective communication skills, and critical thinking in addition to subject mastery. Textbook or make-up assignments are not an adequate substitute for classroom attendance.

It is our conviction that in order to achieve our educational goals and to maintain a high quality, standards-based academic environment, each student must attend his/her classes regularly.

### *Description of Specific Strategies*

#### ***School Attendance Areas***

The Superintendent of Schools, with the approval of the Board of Education, shall, for the purpose of designating the schools to be attended by the students in the District, subdivide the District in such manner that all students shall be assigned to, and be reasonably accommodated in, one of the public schools in the District.

#### ***Compulsory Attendance Age***

The Freeport Union Free School District recognizes that minors from age six (6) to sixteen (16) [or seventeen (17) if

not employed] are required to attend full time day instruction. A minor who turns sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) during the school year must remain in school until the completion of that academic year.

For Special Education students, any exemption from attendance must be approved by the State Education Department upon recommendation by the Committee on Special Education, in accordance with the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, based upon physical disability, severe mental retardation, or mental or emotional disorders.

### ***Entrance Age***

The Freeport Union Free School District recognizes that under the Education Law, a person over five is entitled to attend the public schools maintained in the district. However, a Board is not required to admit a child who becomes five years of age after the school year has commenced unless the child's birthday occurs on or before December 1 st

### ***School Admissions***

The Freeport Union Free School District recognizes that persons over five (5) and under twenty-one (21) years of age who are residents of the district and who have not received a high school diploma, are entitled to attend Freeport schools free of charge. The Board of Education may require verification of age, residency, and immunization, and may also require health certificates.

### ***Communication/Outreach Strategies***

*The Freeport Union Free School District believes that students, parents/guardians, faculty and staff must receive timely, regular and ongoing communication regarding the student attendance policy. The Superintendent of Schools is charged with development of appropriate administrative regulations that ensure such communication takes place, including, at a minimum:*

- Annual events to explain the policy and its implications to parents, students, faculty and staff.
- Periodic reminders of the components of this policy in school and district publications.
- Provision of a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to students, parents/guardians, faculty and staff.
- Regular opportunities during the school year to review the attendance policy with faculty and staff, and to clarify individual roles and responsibilities in its implementation.

### ***Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences***

#### **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

An excused Absence, Tardy, Early Departure (ATED) is due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or severe inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances,

attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, or such other reasons as may be determined by the Board of Education.

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused.

### ***Student Attendance Record Keeping Procedures***

#### **Student Attendance Accounting**

In order to ensure that all students are accounted for and that school personnel have the information they need to communicate with parents/guardians regarding student attendance, a comprehensive accounting system for maintaining student attendance records must be in place.

Building principals are responsible for verifying student attendance records, analyzing attendance data for patterns and trends and ensuring that parents are promptly notified. The principal, or his/her designee, will continuously monitor attendance data to identify students who are absent, tardy, or who leave class or school early. Classroom teachers are responsible for maintaining student attendance records on a daily (elementary) or period basis (secondary).

The Superintendent of Schools is charged with developing appropriate administrative regulations for the collection, maintenance and analysis of student attendance records. Such administrative regulations will include at a minimum, but not be limited to, the following:

- Attendance records will be maintained electronically.
- All attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated staff members responsible for attendance on a daily basis.
- The nature of an ATED will be coded on a student's record.
- Student ATED data will be available to and will be reviewed by the designated school personnel on a regular and ongoing basis .
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance record, such correction will be made. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.

### **Attendance/Grade Policy**

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consequently, consistent with school and teacher grading practices, a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. No student will be denied course credit solely on the basis of unexcused ATEDs.

However, students with excessive unexcused ATEDs who fail a course will not be entitled to attend summer school to make up that course. The number of excessive unexcused absences that disallow students to attend summer school to make up a course will be phased in over a 3 year period as follows:

- 2003-2004: Students who fail a course and have 20 or more unexcused ATEDs in that course per semester, or 40 for the entire school year, will not be entitled to attend summer school to make up that course.
- 2004-2005: Students who fail a course and have 15 or more unexcused ATEDs in that course per semester, or 30 for the entire school year, will not be entitled to attend summer school to make up that course.
- 2005-2006: Students who fail a course and have 10 or more unexcused ATEDs in that course per semester, or 20 for the entire school year, will not be entitled to attend summer school to make up that course.

### **Description of Incentives and Disciplinary Action**

#### **Attendance Incentives**

Each school will design and implement systems at the building and classroom levels to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve attendance.

#### **Disciplinary Consequences**

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, detention or in-school suspension. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. Individual school building principals will design procedures to implement the above .

### **Description of Process to Develop Specific Intervention Strategies**

The Board of Education believes that all students must be given every opportunity to succeed, and that schools must work with students and families to ensure academic success. The Superintendent of Schools will develop administrative regulations that delineate the specific interventions that will occur when students have exhibited a pattern of unexcused ATEDs.

Students with properly excused ATEDs will be given the opportunity to make up the work for each ATED. Students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day because of their participation in a school-sponsored activity (i.e., music lessons, field trips), must arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applies to any student who is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class because of illness or any other excused reason. Make up work must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question.

### **Description of Notice to Parents When Students are Absent**

The Board of Education believes that ongoing and regular communication between home and school is an essential ingredient in student academic success. Furthermore, students and parents/guardians must receive timely and early notification regarding student attendance problems. The Superintendent of Schools will develop administrative regulations that delineate the specific responsibilities of school personnel regarding notification to parents when

students are absent. Such regulations will include, but not be limited to the following:

- School personnel will communicate with each other on a regular and ongoing basis regarding student attendance, particularly when a determination of unexcused absence has occurred.
- Designated staff members will communicate with the student's parent/guardian in a timely manner when determination of an unexcused absence has occurred.
- School administration will be responsible for analyzing pattern absences and developing a system of communication to parents/guardians when excessive absences have occurred.
- Designated school personnel will remind parents/guardians of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance, and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.
- To ensure that parents/guardians and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, designated staff member(s) will advise the student and contact the parent/guardian by telephone and by mail at appropriate intervals.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to notify the school office on the day of any ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. If a written note is not received within five (5) school days, the ATED will automatically be recorded as unexcused.

When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without an excuse, designated staff members will notify the student's parents by phone and mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.

At the elementary level, parents of students who have accumulated 20 or more unexcused ATEDs (5 per marking period), will be notified by the building principal no later than the conclusion of each marking period that lack of attendance will have a serious impact on their child's ability to meet the New York State learning standards.

### **Secondary Summer School**

When the District provides a secondary summer school program, the following attendance policy will apply:

- Every student will receive notification of the policy/procedure on summer school attendance when he or she registers.
- Attendance will be taken during each class period.
- When a student has three (3) ATEDs, the student will be dropped from the course.

### **Annual Review**

The Board will annually review building and district level student attendance records, and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will direct that appropriate action to reverse the decline be implemented.

### **Promoting Community Awareness**

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community be aware of this policy,

its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents/guardians, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures will be implemented.

The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.

- Parents/guardians will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail before the start of the school year.
- Parents/guardians will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understood the policy.

Ref.: Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225 8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6

Revised: July 16, 2003

The motion was seconded by Ms. Piñeyro and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro and Raab

---

### **Appointment of Administrative Staff**

On a motion by Ms. Piñeyro the following motion was adopted:

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education of the Freeport Union Free School District hereby appoints **Jacqueline Harris** as Director of Adult Continuing/Community Education, Career Education, and School, Business and Community Partnerships, a probationary appointment effective July 22, 2003 through July 21, 2006. Compensation will be according to the Administrative Contract on step 6 at \$108,750.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Raab and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro and Raab.

### **Executive Session**

At 8:10 p.m., it was moved by Mr. Raab to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing matters of personnel.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Piñeyro and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro and Raab.

At 9:21 p.m., Ms. Piñeyro moved to adjourn to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Raab and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro and Raab.

### **Adjournment**

At 9:22 p.m. with no other business, Ms. Piñeyro moved to adjourn the meeting for the evening. The motion was

seconded by Mr. Raab, and unanimously carried: Cattano, Piñeyro, and Raab.

#### Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education will be the Tax Levy/Planning/Action meeting held on Wednesday, August 13, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Administration Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary R. Bediako

Clerk of the Board

