

Loyalsock Township School District

Student Activities/Athletics Committee

*Board Conference Room
1720 Sycamore Road
Montoursville, PA 17754*

July 20, 2010

Minutes

1. *Time – 3:30 p.m.*

2. *Roll Call – Sheila Yates, Chair*

MEMBER

_____ Edward Ade
_____ Maureen Carey
_____ Margaret Piper

MEMBER

_____ Stephen Dewar
 X Sheila Yates, Chair

OTHERS

- Matthew Reitz, Loyalsock Township High School Principal
- Robert Gaetano, Middle School Principal
- Sherry Griggs, Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction
- Christina Herman, Director of Student Services & Career Development
- Ronald Insinger, Athletic Director
- Robert Grantier, Superintendent of Schools
- Eugene Yaw, Solicitor

GUESTS

- Tim Smith, LTSD Outreach Services
- Cheryl Plankenhorn, West Branch Drug & Alcohol
- Students from Dr. Reitz's graduate class

3. Notes

Notes of the July 15, 2010 meeting will be shared with committee members.

4. Drug & Alcohol Issues

Discussion -

▪ **Reasonable Suspicion**

- The discussion began at 3:40 p.m., as Mrs. Yates welcomed all participants, including several students visiting from Dr. Reitz's graduate class through Bucknell University.
- The committee opted to schedule the second and final reading and of the reasonable suspicion protocol for August 4, 2010, so that the policy can be adopted on August 25, 2010, in time to be implemented for the fall athletic season.
- Mrs. Yates remarked that she has received much positive feedback from students and members of the community regarding the policy.
- Mr. Grantier mentioned that the most important thing to consider is that committee members have met and have recognized that there is a drug/alcohol problem in the community. Mr. Grantier asked Dr. Reitz to comment on the draft of the Protocol for Student Drug Testing Under Reasonable Suspicion regarding specific drug testing and how it differs from the wording included in Policy No. 227; Drug, Alcohol, Mood Altering Substances.
- Mr. Grantier asked Mr. Yaw to comment on recommended changes to Policy No. 227 that was distributed to committee members and other meeting participants. Mr. Yaw added the word "ingests" in paragraph four of page one, offered a definition of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team on page two, added cheerleaders as qualified student athletes on page three, included a definition of Reasonable Suspicion Drug and Alcohol Testing on page three, recommended no new changes under General Procedures, removed individual suspicion, and sought clarification for enumerated item 7 involving anabolic steroids on page four.
- Mr. Insinger remarked that this past year individual coaches were permitted to decide their own rules regarding use of anabolic steroids. Mr. Grantier recommended that the paragraph be rewritten to include "Performance Enhancing Substances." Dr. Reitz remarked that he will need to be educated on exactly what substances are included in the title, "Performance Enhancing." Mr. Grantier asked committee members if they were interested in testing for performance enhancing drugs. Mr. Gaetano indicated that students that test positive for these substances in other districts are banned from participating in that sport for the rest of the season. Although committee members agreed that an individual's decision to use performance enhancing drugs is disruptive to the group as a whole and is a hindrance to the team because of his/her behavior, members agreed to refrain from including performance enhancing drugs in the policy and stay with the existing language.
- Mrs. Yates remarked that she believed we are concerned with the individual welfare of the student. Mr. Grantier remarked that we should allow the paragraph to remain, and Mr. Yaw concurred. Mr. Yaw recommended that the Pennsylvania Liquor Code be included as a resource.

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- Mr. Grantier recommended that administrators use a checklist to determine if reasonable suspicion exists, and he offered one as an example.
- Mr. Grantier indicated that the results from the first test 5-panel are immediate, and testing will be facilitated through the Susquehanna Work Center. Loyalsock Township School District will cover the cost of the test. However, if the result is positive and the student believes it is a false positive, parents can take the student to the emergency room for another test that takes two days to process and achieve results at their own expense.
- Mr. Grantier recommended that a change be made from affording students and their families 24 hours to administer a blood test to just 4 hours.
- Mrs. Yates recognized that enacting the Protocol for Student Drug Testing Under Reasonable Suspicion (Policy 227) is a small step, but it is what the committee feels comfortable proposing to the Board of School Directors for approval on August 4, 2010.
- Mr. Smith wondered if students who admitted to using drugs would still have to take the blood test. Mr. Gaetano believes that they should still have to take the test to determine the truth in the statement and to determine which drugs the student has used or is using, and committee members concurred.
- Mr. Insinger remarked that a few students have approached him and told him that they are not going to stop using drugs just because there is a policy and protocol in place. He asked the committee what should happen to those students, and he asked if the District is violating their rights because there are no physical attributes to their verbal comments. Dr. Reitz believed that the coach should pursue an appropriate course of action by notifying administration and the SAP team to get help for the student. He remarked that the policy is not a cure-all, but it is a beginning for addressing the problem.
- Mrs. Herman indicated that the description of SAP is accurate, but she recommended that “guidance” counselor be changed to “school” counselor.
- Mr. Insinger remarked that many students can use alcohol and/or drugs and still be academically successful, so it is important to be aware of all the signs of possible alcohol and/or drug use.
- Mr. Grantier indicated that the natural place to start using the protocol would be the time between fall and winter sports, to afford students and their families time to understand the protocol.
- Dr. Reitz remarked that the Reasonable Suspicion Record should include a place to check if a “Student is engaged in a school-sponsored event.”
- Mrs. Yates asked committee members to search for a clause that indicates how students can safely and discretely report instances of use or abuse if they have knowledge of such an event.
- Mr. Gaetano recommended that reasonable suspicion should be changed from “Student Athlete” and extended to “All Students” under *Definitions* on page 3. The description will also include “school-sponsored extra-curricular or co-curricular activities.

- The second reading and full approval of the Reasonable Suspicion Protocol is scheduled for approval at the August 4, 2010 School Board meeting and for adoption on August 25, 2010.
- Mr. Grantier recommended that we post the protocol on our web site and prepare a press release for our Williamsport Sun-Gazette reporter, Jason Seyler.
- **Mandatory Random Drug Testing**
 - Mr. Gaetano distributed the Mandatory Random Drug Testing Program for Student Athletes/Activity Students at Millersburg and offered candid comments about the program. In particular, he included the following:
 - (1) A ban of 30 days out of a sport was too long; retest within 30 days; there is a need for more of the “carrot” and less of the “stick”; and we can lose students who won’t reenter sports or extra-curricular clubs and/or activities.
 - (2) Overall, he believed the policy was effective. Testing was done through the school nurse, and the usual precautions were in effect (i.e., no one can flush the toilet; the student must provide a urine sample within two hours; if the student was not present on the day of the random testing, his/her name would automatically go back into the pool; the names of 20 students were selected per month, and random drug testing occurred twice a month. If the urine sample was positive, the student had to verify any prescription medications and the student was ineligible until he/she provided the prescription through the appropriate “chain of custody” for samples. The process was non-punitive, and self-admittance had a lesser penalty. Students with a positive urinalysis received 20 days out of practice and competition; however, if they refused to go through the Student Assistance Program (SAP) process, they were banned from participating in that sport or activity for the rest of the season.
 - (3) Committee members agreed with Mr. Gaetano that “zero tolerance” does not work, and the goal is to include all students in grades 6-12 in the pool by encouraging them to participate in sports, activities, and extra-curricular events.
 - Mr. Grantier distributed the Drug Testing Protocol for Pine Grove Area School District. He remarked that officials locked down the school, and only the principal was alerted to the date of the testing. Mr. Grantier further commented that Pine Grove used a 10-panel urinalysis, and the district used *Alert Now* to inform parents of the lock down. Pine Grove followed similar procedures by covering faucets and having the school nurse transfer the specimens to Geisinger. Approximately 5% of the 6-12 student body was tested, and they had multiple pools in which students could be entered. Mr. Grantier recommend that we use one large pool instead. Mr. Grantier remarked that Pine Grove’s policy seemed to be punitive because it focused on student athletes, and it did not address students who were not involved in sports, activities, etc.

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- Mr. Grantier challenged members to consider implementing a policy that is fair to all students. A first offense should result in counseling and retesting in 30 or 60 days, while a second offense should result in punitive actions. Mr. Grantier remarked that the most powerful result is that it gives students a reason to say “no” to temptation.
- To summarize, Mrs. Yates offered the following comments:
 1. The second and final reading of the Reasonable Suspicion Protocol (Policy 227) will take place at the meeting of the Board of School Directors on August 4, 2010, and adoption of Reasonable Suspicion Protocol will take place on August 25, 2010.
 2. Committee members should begin to think about the slogan for the awareness campaign.
 3. The protocol will affect students in grades 6-12.
- The following questions/comments were offered by members and visitors:
 - Members expressed a concern about assessment and follow through.
 - Members voiced a concern about restrictions by guidance to see students and a reticence to pull students from academic subjects to meet with community counselors and/or therapists. Dr. Reitz and Mrs. Herman remarked that the protocol has changed under new administrative leadership.
 - From a coach’s perspective, one visitor remarked that he would not want that pressure to determine appropriate consequences. Rather, he would welcome an opportunity to work with the athletic director to create a uniform policy. Additionally, the Code of Conduct guides the actions of all coaches.
 - A brief discussion involved the use of “blockers” such as niacin to block the results of the drug test.
 - Mrs. Herman indicated that we should have district results from the PA Youth Survey (PAYS) to present at the next meeting.
 - Mrs. Yates invited guests to continue to participate in the process by providing their e-mails for communication purposes.

5. Next Meeting

No future meetings were scheduled.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Sheila Yates, Chair