

MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT SAU #37
POLICY COMMITTEE

September 16, 2026

5:30 p.m. Or Immediately following

1. Chair Want called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.
2. The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Committee Members Want, O'Neil-Wong, Potter, Taylor, and St. John.
Also Present: Committee Member Hamer (left at 7:03 p.m.)

3. Public Forum

There was no one present to give public comment.

6. Approval of the Minutes from the August 19, 2026 Policy Committee meeting.

*On motion of **Committee Member O'Neil-Wong**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Taylor**, it was moved to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2026 Policy Committee. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

7. Presentations

There were no presentations this evening.

8. Students 520: Discipline and Due Process policy proposed revisions – by Stacy Champey, Executive Director of Safe and Supportive Schools

Stacy Champey, Executive Director of Safe and Supportive Schools, presented proposed revisions to Student Policy 520, Discipline and Due Process. Ms. Champey explained that the proposed revisions included updating policy references throughout the document and modifying terminology to align with current District practices. Specifically, the term “positive behavior intervention plan” would be revised to “behavior support plan” or “intervention plan” to avoid confusion with terminology specific to special education. Ms. Champey also explained that the policy currently included possession of a firearm within the long-term out-of-school suspension section. Because possession of a firearm is addressed separately as an expellable offense, the proposed revision would clarify that the long-term suspension

section applies to other types of weapons, including BB guns, pellet guns, airsoft guns, and paintball guns.

Questions and comments included:

1. Committee Member Potter noted inconsistent language regarding when an intervention plan is required following suspensions, specifically references to “more than 10 days” versus “10 or more days.” Ms. Champey clarified that an intervention plan should be developed when a student reaches 10 cumulative suspension days and agreed to revise the language throughout the policy to consistently state “10 or more days.”
2. Discussion regarding responsibility for developing and monitoring intervention plans. Ms. Champey explained that the District is building this work into its Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). School-based staff are being identified to monitor suspension data so that intervention can occur before a student reaches 10 days.
3. Intervention plans are intended to address the underlying behavior, establish goals, and identify appropriate supports. Multidisciplinary teams will participate in developing and implementing the plans.
4. At the high school level, student success personnel have been incorporated into this process. At the middle and elementary levels, the District is working with school counselors, community partners, the Office of Youth Services, and community mental health providers to build additional capacity.
5. Committee Member Potter also raised the importance of proactively providing language support when the District knows that a student or family is multilingual. Administration indicated that such support could be provided.
6. Committee Member St. John expressed concern regarding broad “catch-all” language associated with BB guns, pellet guns, airsoft guns, paintball guns, and other objects that may resemble firearms. He noted that overly broad language could potentially include objects that were not intended to fall within this level of discipline. Attorney Upton explained that firearms must be treated separately because possession of a firearm falls within the expulsion provisions. He stated that the broader language was intended to address items that may not meet the legal definition of a firearm but could nevertheless pose a significant safety concern or reasonably appear to others to be a firearm.

7. The Committee discussed examples including airsoft guns, paintball guns, cap guns, blowguns, and emerging types of devices that may resemble or function similarly to weapons. The Administration emphasized that circumstances and intent would be important in determining the appropriate disciplinary response. The proposed language was also intended to eliminate confusion for students and families regarding the distinction between possession of a firearm, which can result in expulsion, and possession of other weapon-like devices.
8. The Administration indicated that the revised policy would be reviewed with principals during an upcoming administrators' Professional Learning Community to promote consistent application.

*On motion of **Committee Member Potter**, duly seconded by **Committee Member O'Neil-Wong**, it was moved to approve the proposed revisions to Students 520: Discipline and Due Process policy, as amended, and forward this item to the full Board of School Committee for approval.*

Committee Member St. John was opposed.

All others were in favor and the motion passed.

9. Student Code of Conduct Proposed Revisions – by Stacy Champey, Executive Director of Safe and Supportive Schools

Ms. Champey presented proposed revisions to the Student Code of Conduct. She thanked the Board Clerk for assisting with the extensive reformatting and cleanup of the document.

The revisions were intended to:

- Update policy numbers and references;
- Align terminology with current District language;
- Remove outdated or duplicative lists of behaviors;
- Clarify the different levels of offenses and responses;
- Incorporate Aspen discipline codes;
- Improve data entry and reporting;
- Identify who is responsible for responding to each level of behavior; and

- Better align the Code of Conduct with the District’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports.

Ms. Champey explained that administrators no longer have permission to independently create new Aspen behavior codes. The revised structure establishes consistent offense levels, codes, descriptions, definitions, and responses.

The Administration is also reviewing discipline data weekly by comparing office referrals with resulting actions to identify inconsistencies and provide additional training and support to schools.

Questions and comments from the committee included:

1. Committee Member Taylor asked whether the proposed Code of Conduct was consistent with the student handbooks previously approved by the Board. Ms. Champey explained that the current handbooks were aligned with the existing Code of Conduct and would need to be reviewed following approval of the revised Code.
2. Committee Member Taylor requested that, wherever possible, formatting and terminology in the Code of Conduct mirror the student handbooks to make the documents easier for students, families, and staff to understand and navigate.
3. Committee Member St. John raised concerns regarding the Level Four offense of “riot,” particularly language allowing an administrator to determine whether an incident constituted a fight or a riot. He expressed concern that an insufficiently defined standard could result in inconsistent application between schools and administrators.
4. The Committee and administration discussed the distinction between a fight involving multiple students and conduct that rises to the level of a riot. New Hampshire statutory language regarding riots was reviewed during the discussion. The Committee discussed incorporating more specific language regarding tumultuous or violent conduct that purposely or recklessly creates a substantial risk of public alarm.
5. Ms. Champey agreed to revise the definition to provide greater clarity and to remove language simply stating that an administrator would decide whether conduct constituted a fight or a riot.
6. Committee Member Potter raised concerns about elevating cutting class to a Level Two offense and the possibility that repeated offenses could ultimately move to Level Three and result in suspension. He questioned whether suspending a student for avoiding class could unintentionally

reinforce the behavior by removing the student from school. Ms. Champey explained that the disciplinary consequences are only one part of the process. The District is developing intervention pathways through MTSS, behavioral health supports, student success staff, and community partners to identify why students are cutting classes and address the underlying barriers. She stated that she reviews discipline data weekly and examines the response when students repeatedly cut classes. If repeated detention or suspension is occurring without a referral to an intervention team, she follows up with administrators.

7. Attorney Upton emphasized that the Code states repeated offenses may progress to a higher level and that Level Three offenses may result in short-term suspension. The language provides discretion and does not require suspension following a specific number of class cuts. The goal is to use interventions and supports before resorting to exclusionary discipline.
8. Committee Member Potter asked whether a structured in-school suspension option could be beneficial for students academically and behaviorally. Ms. Champey stated that an in-school model could be beneficial if it includes appropriate structure, continued access to academics, mentoring, behavioral supports, and a process to help the student successfully reengage in school. She cautioned against simply placing students in a room without support and calling it in-school suspension. The District is working through its student success model to develop more meaningful interventions.
9. The Administration also clarified that references to suspension in the Code are generally intended to refer to out-of-school suspension, as in-school interventions should be treated differently.
10. Committee Member Hamer discussed community and teacher concerns regarding class cutting and noted that Student Conduct would also be reviewing attendance and class-cut data during its monthly meetings.
11. Committee Member O'Neil Wong asked whether teachers would receive clear guidance regarding when Level One behaviors should be addressed by the classroom teacher and when repeated behavior should be referred to an administrator or behavioral health staff. Ms. Champey explained that the District has been developing teacher-managed versus office-managed behavior flowcharts and schoolwide behavior expectations.
12. Training continues at the school level, recognizing that schools have been at different stages of implementation. Systems are also being developed for tracking repeated behaviors across

multiple classrooms so classroom teachers are not individually responsible for identifying patterns involving a student across an entire school day.

13. Aspen is used to track class cuts and other applicable behavior data, and administration continues working with the schools to ensure consistent data entry practices.
14. Discussion followed regarding whether some discipline-tracking challenges could be addressed through a different student information system.
15. The Administration reported that the District has invested significant time and resources customizing Aspen and that transitioning to another system would have considerable short-term costs involving data migration, staff training, and customization.
16. Ms. Champey noted that intervention referral systems and Power BI dashboards have been developed over several years using Aspen data. Any transition would need to account for the potential rebuilding of these systems.
17. Committee members discussed the importance of considering both the limitations of the existing system and the operational impact of moving staff and families to a new platform.
18. Committee Member Potter requested that administration consider circumstances in which a student is attempting to comply with an alternative-to-suspension program but encounters a barrier such as transportation or employment. He expressed concern that students should not receive additional punishment when a legitimate barrier prevents participation.
19. Committee Member Potter also discussed the proposed category addressing students who are “in the presence of” drugs or alcohol. He noted that circumstances could vary significantly and suggested that administrators retain the ability to distinguish between a student actively participating in prohibited behavior and a student who may simply be present or attempting to assist another student. Attorney Upton explained that administrators already exercise significant discretion when investigating these incidents and consider the individual circumstances before determining an appropriate response.
20. The Administration emphasized that, with the exception of certain mandatory offenses such as bringing a firearm to school, disciplinary situations generally require investigation, judgment, and consideration of the individual circumstances.
21. The Code intentionally uses discretionary terms such as “may” and “can” rather than mandatory terms such as “shall” in appropriate sections. Ms. Champey noted that adding specific Aspen

codes for students who are “in the presence of” drugs or alcohol would also allow the District to better track patterns and determine where additional prevention efforts may be needed.

22. Ms. Champey proposed adding an additional Level Four category of “Other Weapon” to align the Code of Conduct with state Safe Schools reporting requirements. The category would include possession of a weapon other than a firearm or destructive device, including examples such as:

- Knife;
- Club;
- Razor blade;
- Chain;
- Sharp object used as a weapon; and
- Stun gun.

23. The Administration clarified that ordinary objects used during an assault would not necessarily be categorized as an “other weapon.” The circumstances and nature of the incident would determine the appropriate reporting category.

24. Ms. Champey explained that accurate classification is important because Safe Schools data is used for state and federal reporting and can help the District identify where prevention programs, funding, and additional resources are needed.

25. The Committee incorporated the amendments discussed during the meeting, including revisions to the definition of riot and the addition of the “Other Weapon” category.

*On motion of **Committee Member Taylor**, duly seconded by **Committee Member O’Neil-Wong**, it was moved to approve the proposed revisions to the Student Code of Conduct, as amended, and forward this item to the full Board of School Committee for approval. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

The Committee thanked Ms. Champey for her work on the revisions and again recognized the Board Clerk for the extensive work involved in reorganizing and formatting the Code of Conduct.

10. TABLED ITEMS

There were no tabled items this evening.

11. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business presented.

ADJOURNMENT

12. If there is no further business, a motion is in order to adjourn.

*On motion of **Committee Member O'Neil-Wong**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Taylor**, it was moved to adjourn. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.*

True Copy. Attest.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angela M. Lang".

Clerk of Committee