

Dunbarton School District
Dunbarton, New Hampshire
Dunbarton School Board Public Hearing
October 6, 2010

Board Members present
Debra Foster
Rene Ouellet
Deborah Trottier
Carl Metzger

Administration present
Stacy Buckley, Superintendent
Carol Thibaudeau, Principal
Ray Labore, Business Administrator

Call to Order

Debra Foster called the meeting to public hearing to order at 7:15 to discuss the use of audio recording on all of the buses.

Opening of Public Hearing regarding use of Audio/Video on School Buses

Mrs. Buckley explained that one of the requirements of the bus company under the bus contract is to provide video on all buses. In addition, the bus company also purchased a system that can audio record. However, NH RSA 570-A which deals with wire tapping and eavesdropping states that prior to any audio recording, the school board shall hold a public hearing to determine whether audio recording should be authorized. The school board must then develop an administrative procedure. Mrs. Buckley further explained that the law spells out what the school board has to have in a policy, such as who is actually allowed to listen to the audio tapes. A recording can't be held for more than 10 days.

A sign on each bus must be prominently displayed, thereby giving notice that the buses are monitored via video and audio.

There has to be a reason to listen to the audio or watch the video. The intent is to protect the students.

Mrs. Buckley also discussed the pros and cons of having audio on the buses. She explained that having audio will help when looking at disciplinary issues. The audio will help in determining if there is verbal bantering or verbal bullying. In addition, the audio will help school bus drivers focus on their driving rather than trying to listen to what is going on in the bus.

Mrs. Buckley also remarked that the students all know there is video on the buses and consequently, there has been better behavior.

The cons would be that some people may think that this violates privacy rights.

Public Comment

None

Rene Ouellet stated that he can see the necessity of having audio because we don't staff the buses for personal supervision. However, he has a number of concerns and wants to see the bus

company policy regarding who will see the audio and when. Mrs. Buckley stated that the bus company would have to follow the school district's policy.

Mr. Ouellet further commented that he wants a formal acknowledgement from the bus company that they have reviewed the policy and agree with it.

Stacy explained that the recommended policy is that the only people who can review the audio tapes would be the Superintendent or designee, business administrator, and/or contracted officials. However, no one can listen to the audio tapes without authorization from the Superintendent. Debra Foster stated that parents have a right to access the tapes. Mrs. Buckley explained that if there was a disciplinary action, parents would have the right to listen to the audio or watch the video.

Rene says this implies that no one from bus company could review the tapes. Mrs. Buckley stated that a bus contractor could review the tapes, however, there has to be a disciplinary report and they have to have a reason to watch the video or listen to the audio. In addition, the bus company would need permission from the Superintendent. They can't randomly watch or listen.

Rene Ouellet asked that the bus company identify who would review the tape. Stacy Buckley stated that for the video, the designated person is Terry. She will double check to see if Terry is also the designated person for the audio tapes.

Rene Ouellet said that this is a slippery slope and we have to be careful who can look at this.

Mrs. Buckley also stated that if a bus driver gets into an accident, we can document what happened. If a car drives around a bus, we can report it to the police department because the video will capture it.

Debra Foster said that if bullying happens on the back of the bus, and it's verbal, you can't tell by just a video. She also stated that this policy would tie in with the bullying policy.

Mrs. Foster opened it up to questions to the public. There were no questions or comments from the public.

Mr. Ouellet stated that he wants more information before the board takes action in adopting this policy. He wants to know how the truck company will train their staff. Mr. Ouellet wants the bus company's response in writing.

Adjournment

Rene Ouellet motioned to adjourn the public hearing at 7:31pm – Seconded by Deborah Trottier– Motion Passed

Respectfully submitted by

Judith VanKalken
Recording Secretary