

CHaSE Standing Committee Notes

October 25, 2023

1. Meeting called to order by Ben at 11:42am, quorum met.
2. Committee reviewed notes from 10/20/23 CHaSE meeting.
 - a. Continuation of privacy/confidentiality discussion from 10/20/2023:

On October 20, 2023, CHaSE had a discussion about concerns for the need of some level of confidentiality during standing committee work sessions. This discussion is reflected in the October 20, 2023, CHaSE notes. The committee agreed to re-visit the discussion on October 25, 2023, because not all members were present.

BACKGROUND: The confidentiality concern was brought to the committee because in the week following the October 13, 2023, CHaSE meeting, three members of the CHaSE committee received text messages and/or emails from people outside the committee that they felt were personally attacking their character and making harmful accusations that the three members were “indoctrinating” children and “not protecting the innocence of youth.” The accusers seemed to base these allegations on how these three particular CHaSE members voted on the topic of transmission of STDs from Lesson 2.

FOR CONTEXT AND CLARIFICATION

The previous debate over the lesson was mostly centered on a statement within the curriculum that provided a medically accurate explanation to meet TEKS 23(D) which expects students to “describe the various modes of transmission of STDs/STIs.” Although medically accurate, the statement explicitly used as part of the lesson raised concerns on the appropriateness of the language for the intended age level of students as well as not aligning to “community values.” Suggestions for how to reword the statement to be more age-appropriate while also maintaining medical accuracy were discussed, but no clear rewording had been decided upon. Before continuing to discuss how to reword the statement, a motion was made, and a vote was taken to determine whether a majority of the committee wanted to leave the statement as written or continue to try to reword it. In a 7 to 3 vote, the motion to leave the wording as written by the publisher to ensure medical accuracy in meeting the TEKS was recorded. It is important to note that in later discussions, some members revealed they were unclear what specifically the motion was because they were still struggling with how to reconcile the most medically accurate, clear way to meet the TEKS yet also “soften” the language to be more age appropriate. Some members expressed their confusion stating they felt the vote was on whether to keep the original language or change it to what had been suggested at the time but had not been finalized which they felt was not a medically accurate, clear way to meet the TEKS.

On October 25, 2023, as part of the continued discussion on the need for some level of confidentiality, it was disclosed that three other CHaSE members had conversations with their Trustees about the discussions occurring during standing committee work sessions and the voting results on the topic of the transmission of STDs from Lesson 2. It was further disclosed that one CHaSE member shared with their Trustee not only the 7-3 tally of the votes on the topic, but also the names of the people who voted in favor of changing the original language used by the publisher.

Concerns were raised that the lack of full context of discussions that occur during standing committees could cause people outside of the committee to not understand the full scope of the discussions, leading them to draw inaccurate conclusions about members of the CHaSE, potentially leading to the type of

character attacks three CHaSE members had received. Some CHaSE members expressed disappointment, frustration, and anger with their fellow CHaSE members for discussing names and specific information on how they voted with Trustees without the knowledge or consent of other CHaSE members. Although no explicit agreements had been made previously by the committee members regarding confidentiality, some members expressed that they had been working under the assumption that the discussions and voting during standing committees were confidential minus what was recorded in the notes.

For these reasons, the committee discussed ideas on how they could maintain transparency of the work happening in the standing committee work sessions while also respecting other members' desire to keep their names, what they say, and especially how they vote confidential to deter the harassment some CHaSE members experienced.

The committee will revisit the agreement suggestions from October 20 that would be in place moving forward:

1. Content of meetings can be discussed outside of the standing committee with attention to how it is presented, but names are not to be used.
2. All votes are done using paper ballots or through a digital application that would not reveal the voters name but would allow everyone to see the tally of votes (i.e. mentimeter poll)
3. The notes for the standing committee work sessions would NOT include names of specific standing committee members other than those who make or second a motion.
4. Members agree not to record meetings.
5. Members agree to be mindful of phone usage during standing committee work sessions. If necessary, step out of the room to send texts or take phone calls.
6. Add a statement to the top of agendas to remind members to maintain confidentiality of names and confidentiality of discussions outside of standing committee agenda.

The proposed agreements have not been voted on because not all members were present and are considered tacit agreements.

This discussion took the entirety of the meeting, so all other agenda items were moved to October 27, 2023.

3. No curriculum was discussed in this meeting.
4. Action items and next steps for next meeting
 - a. Scheduled for 10/27/23
 - b. Focus: curriculum edits for 7th grade
5. Upcoming deadlines:
 - a. November 8, 2023 - All 7th & 8th grade HSAE & Abuse Prevention Edits are due to full SHAC for review
 - b. November 15, 2023 - Full SHAC Meeting (to present 7th & 8th grade HSAE edits)