

HOLLIDAYSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES

The Hollidaysburg Area School Board met **Monday, November 7, 2022** for a **Committee of the Whole – Work Session** in the Senior High Auditorium. Ms. Hartman called the meeting to order at 6:05p.m. and opened the meeting with the pledge to the flag.

Roll call was taken by Ms. Hartman with seven members present. Attending were Ms. Hartman, President, Mr. Nichols, Vice-President, Ms. Frye, Mr. Snyder, Mr. Stephens, Ms. Bilek, and Ms. Costanza. Dr. Sommer participated virtually. Mr. Brenneman was absent.

Also present were Dr. Gildea, Superintendent, Mrs. Palazzi, Director of Curriculum, Mr. Caldwell, Director of Human Resource/Transportation, Mr. Nihart, Director of Physical Plant, Mr. Arthur, Director of Technology, Mr. Harrington, Mr. McCall, Mr. Hartline, Mr. Keagy, Dr. Letcher, Mr. Krott, Attorney Beard, Sr., Solicitor and an Altoona Mirror representative.

Announcements: Ms. Hartman announced that the meeting was not an emergency meeting, but was scheduled at the October meeting. The topic of the meeting was the discussion of Policy 824 only and no official vote would take place.

Public Comment

The following individuals participated in public comment related to Policy 824:

Kirk Dodson, Krista Murphy, Lydia Link, Thomas Jandora, Diane Kreuger, Eric Daum, Carrie Freie, Ying Li, Mike Rawlins, Kelly Hartman, Dr. Charles Howells, Jennifer Heinlein, Scott Barger, William Shoeman, Richard Latker, Matt Kreuger, Rebecca Strzelec, Luke Jandora, Tom Fedesco, Erin Shubik, Louis Lusk, Rosalind Merritts, Cristine Leighty, and Michele Luther.

Discussion

Ms. Bilek opened the floor to discussion and edits to Policy 824, Maintaining Professional Adult / Student Boundaries. Ms. Bilek provided background information on the topic of gender identity and requesting pronouns that was discussed by the board at the September board meeting.

Ms. Bilek reviewed Policy 824, noting that the items in boldface were submitted as possible edits and were reviewed by the solicitor for his/her opinion.

No. 10 Under Prohibited Conduct and No. 7 under Social Interactions were the most problematic of the policy.

Problems identified included:

- The religion portion of the policy

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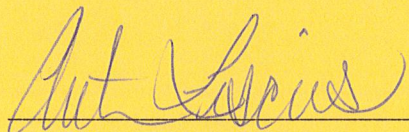
- Who would police the policy and inspect the classrooms
- Differentiating so as not to be discriminatory
- Opposition to or any change to the current policy
- The use of the word conspicuous vs inconspicuous
- The vagueness of the policy
- The definition of political, religious, and sexual oriented materials
- Striking No. 7 under Social Interactions entirely
- Removal of the pride flag from the classroom and the intent behind it
- The message behind removal of the flag for members of the LGBTQ community

Ms. Hartman remarked that a pride flag was a symbol of acceptance, but Ms. Costanza argued that it wasn't by definition. Ms. Hartman stated it was by law. At Ms. Costanza's request, Mrs. Hartman said she would provide her with case law. Ms. Costanza commented that every time she requests something in writing or something on case law, she doesn't receive it.

Attorney Beard recommended that the board put their focus on No. 7 as it relates to political items and the religious piece for the time being if the board intends to vote on it.

It was agreed to that the solicitor would take a look at the policy, and provide the board with feedback for discussion and first reading at the November 16 meeting.

There being no further business to be brought before the board, Ms. Hartman declared the meeting adjourned at 8:59p.m.



Autumn Fiscus
Board Secretary