

Lehigh Area School District

Lehigh, Pennsylvania

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 6:45 PM

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Call to Order

J. Cleaver apologized for the delay as it had taken a long time to download the recording from the previous Academic Affairs Meeting. The March 3, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:58 PM by Board President L. Stern



III. Roll Call

	Present	Absent
Mr. David F. Bradley, Sr., Board Member	X	☐
Mrs. Rita Spinelli, Board Treasurer	X	☐
Mr. Larry Stern, Board President	X	☐
Mr. Jonathan Cleaver, Superintendent	X	☐
Ms. Janine Partenio, Recording Secretary	X	☐

Also Present:

Edward Rarick, Tim Tkach and John Spinelli.

IV. Policy Review for First Reading for Public Review and Comment

1) [Policy 251 - Homeless Students](#)

J. Cleaver explained that this policy is required and the requested changes were included in the policies shown. He said the District will be going through an audit this year and mentioned how the District currently has two students displaced, unfortunately, that fall under this policy. He said the District is working with them to make sure they are meeting their academic requirements. He explained that the policy addresses students who may be temporarily displaced due to insurance purposes (for lead or radon in the home) or how a temporary location may be located in another District. He said the District would supply transportation and students may be located as far as the Scranton School District, for example. He mentioned how the districts would work together to assist in meeting their needs. He explained that the policy updates include new guidelines that meet the best interest of the student. He said a dispute resolution is included if there was dispute and the requirements for how educational records are shared. He also stated how Title I, ELL, Gifted and Special Education service funds would help to offset the costs involved. He mentioned that training is required and the guidance counselors/social workers are very heavily involved with the process.

R. Spinelli asked if the changes were made to comply with the laws that the District needs to abide by. J. Cleaver said yes, these were the recommended changes presented to the Policy Committee. He mentioned that the policy would be part of the review with the audit and the auditors may even recommend additional amendments, based upon the outcome of the review process.

L. Stern questioned what would happen if a student in Scranton would wind up in Lehighton. J. Cleaver said if they were displaced as a homeless student from Scranton, we would have to work with the Scranton School District to create a method to assist the student. L. Stern asked if the student had the option to choose where to go. J. Cleaver said yes, if it is for an extended period of time or if they are living with relatives in the area, it may be in the best interest to have the student switch to another school. L. Stern said that he appreciated that everyone was working to ensure that the students get a proper education.

D. Bradley asked if L. Stern or R. Spinelli wrote any of the changes on this policy. J. Cleaver said no, it was worked on by himself, Mr. Tkach and their homeless liaison and state reviewer. D. Bradley asked who the state reviewer would be for homeless students in the District. T. Tkach said it was Mr. Jeff Zimmerman. D. Bradley asked what department he worked for. T. Tkach said the Homeless and Foster Care Region 7 in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Area for federal and state. D. Bradley asked T. Tkach to forward his information. T. Tkach agreed to do so. D. Bradley asked why that information was not provided to the Board prior to the discussion of this policy at the Policy Committee Meeting. He asked why the Policy Committee was not included in the creation of the changes to the policy. L. Stern said the people who were involved are well-educated in the support needed for the students in this environment and that is why we have them to assist with the process. An argument ensued about writing policy by D. Bradley.

2) Policy 808 - Food Services

J. Cleaver explained that the addition to Policy 808 was how the District makes the effort to collect bad debt. He mentioned that this was recommended by the District auditors. He stated that it addressed what is recoverable and what is not and said the current amount of debt the District incurred in food service balances was \$13,587. He said some accounts have since moved to Free/Reduced lunch and that would automatically eliminate them from having to make any additional payments. He mentioned the policy amendments include the layers that the District would go through to attempt to collect the debt service from students who have a remaining balance.

L. Stern asked if this was added to show the accounting to recover the bad debt and how the state likes to see it handled. J. Cleaver said that was correct. He said the auditors will review this also to make sure the District is following the procedure. L. Stern said he appreciated how the policy was worded that it would not be the student's issue and would go to the parent/guardian, to have them apply for a free/reduced lunch program. He also said he appreciated that the student would not be confronted and lunch would still be available for them. He believed those key points were addressed in the changes to the policy.

D. Bradley asked if L. Stern or R. Spinelli was involved in writing these changes to the policy. J. Cleaver said this had been reviewed by the administration and will be presented to the Board at the same time. D. Bradley felt that they should be writing the policy. He said some students, in the past, were refused meals because they had a high balance. He said L. Stern said that does not happen. D. Bradley asked if that happens. L. Stern stated that he did not say that it did not happen, just that the policy states that it will not happen. J. Cleaver said there are no students that are being denied meals as there are shaming laws intact for that purpose. D. Bradley asked how this policy ensures that accountability is held to the entire School District. He was looking for information on how a written complaint would be reviewed and handled by the Board. He asked why all of the policies miss that piece regarding complaints. He wanted that corrected before moving forward with the first reading of this policy. He asked R. Spinelli her thoughts. She felt that they should move on because D. Bradley was looking for something to pick at and deride someone for. D. Bradley asked for L. Stern's thoughts. L. Stern said he did not believe that the policy needed a complaint process since the District already has a public complaint policy and

process in place. He mentioned that D. Bradley was stating non-factual information and half-truths in these meetings. D. Bradley had an issue with the adjudication process and formal complaints. D. Bradley was being disruptive. and R. Spinelli asked where they were in the Meeting.

V. Policy Review for Second Reading and Final Approval

- 1) [Policy 146.1 - Trauma-Informed Approach](#) (NEW POLICY)
- 2) [Policy 334 - Sick Leave](#)
- 3) [Policy 334.1 - Sick Leave Bank](#)
- 4) [Policy 335 - Family and Medical Leaves](#)

L. Stern and R. Spinelli had no other comments or questions about the previous policies with changes going for Second Reading and Final Approval by the Board.

VI. Public Comment

J. Cleaver mentioned how there were no questions or comments by the public. He also stated how there were no other questions or comments by any other Board Members, either. D. Bradley had an issue with the policy amendment process. He said there are people that make a formal written complaint but the Board does not have a proper review for due process (according to Policy 906). D. Bradley mentioned bullying, harassment and transportation and asked L. Stern how the formal written complaint process would be implemented since it was not being implemented. R. Spinelli was trying to ask a question and D. Bradley continued speaking about the same topic. J. Cleaver said that it was D. Bradley's opinion that the complaint process was not being implemented. R. Spinelli said the only reason why D. Bradley wanted a formal hearing was to air out everyone's dirty laundry in the public, and that is not what a School District is about.

VII. Adjournment

Next scheduled Board Meeting is on Monday, March 22, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Next scheduled Policy Committee Meeting is on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 6:45 PM

MOTION by R. Spinelli, SECONDED by L. Stern to adjourn the meeting.

Time Adjourned : 7:21 PM