

**Oak Park and River Forest High School
201 North Scoville Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302**

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
February 19, 2008**

A Policy Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, in the Board Room of the Oak Park and River Forest High School. Dr. Lee called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Committee members present were Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John P. Rigas. Also present were Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Cheryl Witham, Chief Financial Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; James Paul Hunter, F.S.E.C. Chair; Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

Acceptance of Policy Committee Minutes of January 15, 2008

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to accept the minutes of the January 15, 2008 meeting as presented.

Policies Under Consideration for Second Reading

Policy 5117, Tuition and Residential Status of Students

It was the consensus of the majority of the Policy Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 5117, Tuition and Residential Status of Students, for second reading and action at its regular February Board of Education meeting.

Ms. Patchak-Layman proposed the following changes to the policy.

- 1) When the District questions residency, specify to the parent the additional information necessary to satisfy residency and/to provide an explanation for the additional information, e.g., discrepancy in dates on the lease, or two different addresses listed, etc.

The administration disagreed with putting this into Board policy but noted that IV. B. of the procedures offered the opportunity for discussion. Mr. Rigas added that the District would not want to codify the list because there are many occasions when people try to defraud the District. When an investigation is taking place, the last thing the administration would want to do is tell the issue, so that the fraud could be fixed. That is not prudent nor in the best interest of the school district.

- 2) List the items a parent may use to show residency in the policy and when home visits or observations occur in the process.

The administration responded that the enrollment packet given to freshman that was approved by the ISBE listed the items from which a parent could choose to prove residency. In addition, home visits and/or observations occurred when something were not found to be right. Advising families in advance of such activity would in effect negate its value.

- 3) Specify how mail should be sent to the parents, i.e., that mail would be sent certified to the parent. The administration said that the District always communicates in a timely way and that could include certified mail, regular mail, or even making a telephone call. Specifying the use of certified mail would preclude any other type of communication not listed from being utilized.
- 4) In the procedures, change the title of Item III to Students in Exchange Programs. The rest of the committee did not feel this was necessary.
- 5) At the end of Section IV, Under A, add the sentence: “The Board of Education will be notified when this occurs.” Mr. Rigas explained it would inappropriate for the Board of Education to have information about a residency case before the completion of an investigation. The Board of Education should not discuss the case with anyone before it comes formally to the Board of Education.
- 6) On the last page of the procedures, Ms. Patchak-Layman proposed adding, “If the student contests the Board of Education decision in Circuit Court, the student shall remain in school until the court case is decided.” It was explained that in previous situations, the judge has issued a stay put order until the court case is heard; thus, the judge makes the decision. If the parent takes the school to Circuit Court for an injunction, then the high school would get its direction from the court.

There was no support from the balance of the Policy Committee members for the changes proposed by Ms. Patchak-Layman.

5115, Bus Conduct—Special Education

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it adopt Policy 5115, Bus Conduct—Special Education, at its regular February Board of Education meeting. It was also the consensus of the Policy Committee members to rename the procedures, Administrative Procedures for Policy 5115, Bus conduct – Special Education.

Mr. Edgecombe reported that one parent had called in support of videotaping on the bus. Mr. Edgecombe referred to the following memorandum from John Relias explaining the District’s obligation relative to providing transportation if a student is suspended. The memorandum states:

“1) If bus privileges have been removed due to a disciplinary infraction, the parent is required to provide transportation. However, if the parents are not able to provide transportation then the

bus suspension becomes a school suspension with all the attendant special education protections, i.e., services required after the 10th day of suspension and other protections. 2) If the bus suspension is only 10 days or less then the penalty can be imposed before any appeal. However if the parent cannot drive the student to school then we get into the same scenario mentioned in 1. 3) Since a school can discipline a special education for 10 days without providing any services even if the misconduct is related to the handicapping condition, the parents have the responsibility of transporting. After the initial 10 day period if the misconduct is related then while you can still suspend from the bus for a second infraction (but not more than 10 days), if the parents cannot transport then the second suspension becomes a regular school suspension and some services need to be provided or transportation by the school needs to be re-instituted.”

Ms. Patchak-Layman was concerned that the District was not fulfilling its obligation to provide transportation when an IEP calls for such. In counting the suspensions from the bus, she was troubled by the coupling of those two activities.

Mr. Edgecombe responded that when it comes to OCS students suspended for 10 days, they are treated in the same manner as regular Education students. the attorney says that if the District does not provide another means of transportation, the 10-day rule is in effect for each day of school missed due to the suspension. Ms. Patchak-Layman added that it was only referencing the bus, but the District does provide other transportation. Ms. Witham stated that the bus is not used for suspended students, only in long-term situations.

Mr. Edgecombe stated that the District could suspend a student from bus privileges because of behavior and the school could provide a cab, but if the District chooses not to provide a cab or other form of transportation and the student lost days of schooling, those days would count towards his/her 10-days of OSS. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted the following sentence added: “The district’s regular suspension procedures are in effect when a student’s privilege to ride the bus or a tax is suspended.”

Ms. Patchak-Layman proposed substituting the last sentence after item six with: “A bus suspension shall be counted as a day of suspension if the following conditions exists, the student’s IEP calls for transportation as a related service and the district does not provide another means of transportation.” The purpose would be to broaden it so that all students are able to have that same privilege whether the parent provides the transportation, as Mr. Edgecombe responded that this would accelerate the 10-day suspension.

There was no support from the balance of the Policy Committee members for the proposed changes by Ms. Patchak-Layman.

Consideration of Policies for First Reading

Policy 104, Philosophy of Grading

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 104, Philosophy of Grading, for first reading at its regular February Board of Education meeting with the following enhancement:

Change the word “profile” to “syllabus” throughout the policy.

While Ms. Patchak-Layman had suggested a Grading Scale as noted below to all Teacher Course Syllabus, it did not receive support from the rest of the Committee members. Mr. Rigas, Mr. Allen, and Dr. Lee vocalized objection to standardized grading, as it is not the Board of Education’s job to set policy on the grading scale of individual departments.

90 to 100	A
89 to 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 to 69	D
Under 59	F

Dr. Lee added that a grade was an expression of the professional judgment of one teacher. He did not believe it were desirable for standardized grades in any way. He believed what Ms. Patchak-Layman proposed was an infringement on the academic freedom and the professional judgment of teachers. Dr. Millard added that teachers are to provide course syllabus and their grading information is included in that document.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if it were O.K. for a teacher to give a grade of 4, 3, 2 or 1. And she was told yes. She asked how important is it to teachers to not have to follow grading scale. Would teachers decide not to teach at the school? The school has a policy to report grades as A, B, C, D, or E. There is a standard way of reporting grades; there is a de facto policy.

Policy, 1120, Access to District Public Records

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve Policy 1120, Access to District Public Records, for first reading at its regular February Board of Education meeting, as presented.

1125, School Auxiliary Organizations

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve Policy 1125, School Auxiliary Organization, for first reading at its regular February Board of Education meeting, with the following enhancements:

- 1st Para: Replace “Superintendent/Principal” with “Board of Education”
- 2nd Para, 4 line: Delete the words “curricular and extra curricular programs of”
- After 3rd Para: Add the list of qualifying auxiliary organizations

Policy 1130, Use of Mailboxes and Mailing Privileges

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve Policy 1130, Use of Mailboxes and Mailing Privileges, for first reading, at its regular February Board of Education meeting, with the following enhancements:

Replace Paragraph 3 with the following: “Qualifying auxiliary organizations of the District may distribute information to faculty and staff mailboxes regarding meetings and sponsored events. They may also request that information concerning their organizations be included in general school mailings already scheduled, provided space is available.”

Delete the list of auxiliary organizations.

Discussion ensued regarding substituting the word “policies” with the word “student.”

Adjournment

The Policy Committee adjourned at 10:35 a.m.