

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

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
August 15, 2007**

A Policy Committee meeting was held on Thursday, August 15, 2007, in the Board Room of the Oak Park and River Forest High School. Dr. Lee called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, IV, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and Dr. Ralph H. Lee. Also present were Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Bridgette Kennedy of the *Oak Leaves* Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; James Paul Hunter, F.S.E.C. Chair; Wyanetta Johnson and Burcy Hines, community members; Dr. Carl Spight, O.P.R.F.H.S. Institutional Researcher; and Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

**Acceptance of the June 21, 2007 Policy Committee Minutes**

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to accept the minutes of the June 21, 2007 Policy Committee minutes, as presented.

**Consideration of Policies for First Reading**

Policy 5200, School Choice

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve Policy 5200, School Choice, for first reading with the following amendments at the regular August Board of Education meeting.

Page 1, Para 1, Lines 4&5: Delete the words “to the extent practicable”

Mr. Edgecombe noted that Policy 5200 was being presented for first reading, as drafted by the attorney, as a requirement for No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While this had been presented at the July 12 Special Board Meeting, there was a question as to why the District had to institute a policy that it may not be able to fulfill just to satisfy federal guidelines. Mr. Edgecombe directed the Committee members’ attention to the caveat “to the extent practical.” He continued that the policy was designed for a district where there are multiple schools. For a single school district other factors must be considered, such as an intergovernmental agreement permitting the exchange of students based on the conditions outlined in the policy.

Change of Terminology

Discussion ensued regarding whether the Board of Education could do a blanket removal of the term “superintendent/principal” and replacing it with just “superintendent” by Board of Education approval. Legal counsel advised that it was not necessary to review each policy separately and make the adjustment. Discussion ensued and it was the consensus of the Committee members to following Dr. Weninger’s suggestion of noting on the website that the District now has two positions, not one. Thus, no formal action is necessary.

### **Consideration of Policies for Second Reading**

#### **Policy 20, Board of Education**

Even though this was technically the second time that this policy was being brought to the Policy Committee, this was the first time that new Board of Education members were reviewing it. As such, Ms. Patchak-Layman had significant questions/suggestions for this policy. Her questions/suggestions included the following:

1. Educational services need to be recommended by the superintendent.
2. Add Develop Annually the goals of the Board of Education and the District
3. Seating new Board of Education members, i.e., The Board of Education will administer the oath in the next special Board of Education meeting or open Board of Education meeting whichever comes first following the canvass in order to eliminate any meetings in between and to speed up the canvassing as much as possible. Ms. Fisher disagreed with adding any language that would deviate from Illinois law.
4. On Page 5, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: Delete “unless specifically stated otherwise.” She suggested that the Board of Education president make the recommendation and that the board approve this.
5. In Section VII: Add the line, “The Board of Education commitment to having meetings which are open, accessible and held at times convenient for the public.” Discussion ensued. Dr. Millard noted that “convenient for the public is different from one person to another, based upon their work requirements. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that she was being mindful of having Board closed sessions and then asking the public to be around for 3 hours or more for the public session. There is some awareness and cognizance of making sure that Board of Education meetings were easy for the public to attend. She continued that there be efficiencies of meetings in that no action would be taken after closed session, i.e., personnel items) or no major action would take place in closed session. (NOTE: Board of Education members may not take any action in closed session.) Ms. Fisher noted that this could be arbitrarily limiting the Board of Education’s discussion and could be a disservice to the Board of Education, as it was putting form over substance. Dr. Lee noting that there were two problems: 1) the scheduling of Board of Education meetings convenient for the public, and 2) keeping people waiting for an indeterminate amount of time when an action must be taken after discussion is closed session. He suggested that there were times when the vote could wait

until the next meeting. Ms. Fisher stated that typically student discipline and personnel issues are items that need a decision as soon as possible. It would hold people hostage not to put forth the vote. The Board of Education could agree to take a vote at the beginning of the session, if possible, but most items are of an urgent matter and a vote would be necessary. Dr. Lee hoped that there would be agreement that the Board of Education would take action on decisions only when necessity.

In the interest of time, it was the consensus of the Policy Committee members that the following Policies would be resubmitted to them at the September Policy Committee meeting. Dr. Lee asked that any additions/suggestions/deletions be submitted to Mr. Edgecombe prior to that meeting so that they could be incorporated into the policy prior to the committee members receiving them for the next meeting.

Policy 5114, Student Discipline  
Policy 5114-1, Implementing Procedures.  
Policy 5114-2, Behavioral Interventions and Isolated Time Out/Physical Restraint for Disabled Students)

#### 5114-3, Student Discipline Pertaining to Psychostimulant Medication

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve the second reading and deletion of Policy 5114-3, Student Discipline Pertaining to Psychostimulant Medication, at its regular August Board of Education meeting.

#### 5114-A – Hazing

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee Members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 5114-A, Hazing, for second reading and action with the following enhancement at its regular August Board of Education meeting.

Renumber Policy 5114-A, Hazing as such: Policy 5114-4, Hazing.

In response to Ms. Patchak-Layman's question as to whether a teacher could haze a student or students, Dr. Lee and Mr. Edgecombe stated a teacher cannot haze a student, but the teacher could abuse a student. Dr. Weninger stated that if an adult who has some authority over a student were to conduct himself/herself in that matter, it would be considered harassment and the school has a policy on harassment.

#### **Next Policy Committee Meeting**

Dr. Lee informed the Committee members and the visitors that he and Dr. Weninger had jointly prepared a recommended Policy Statement as follows:

The Board hereby recognizes that one of its primary goals is to foster the development of the ability, in each student, to control his/her own behavior in a positive and constructive manner, and to do so in an environment of fairness to all students, families and school personnel. The school system is committed to doing this through two primary means: (1) development and maintenance of a professional staff with expertise in helping individual students in their own emotional and behavioral development; and (2) charging all adult employees of the school district with a measure of responsibility (appropriate to his/her duties) for communicating positive behavioral expectations to our students.”

This will be presented at the next Policy Committee meeting for discussion. Ms. Fisher noted that the statement was well written and encompassed what needed to be expressed, but she wondered whether this was a contractual issue as it makes charges of faculty and every employee of the district and she was unsure whether it would have an impact in terms of conformity.

### **Adjournment**

The Policy Committee adjourned at 11:50 p.m.