



MINUTES
Policy Committee Meeting
District Office Board Room – May 4, 2022

Those in attendance: Nikki Gardner-Committee Chairwoman, Jan Hammond – Board Chair, Ken Loveless – Board Vice Chair, Rebecca Blackburn-Hines – Trustee (virtually), Cathy Huddle – Trustee, Matt Hogan – Trustee, Akil Ross – Superintendent. The meeting was open to the public and was live-streamed.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Committee Chairwoman Gardner. The minutes were approved with a motion by Huddle and a 2nd by Hogan by unanimous vote, with Trustee Blackburn-Hines abstaining. The agenda was approved with a motion by Huddle and a 2nd from Hammond by unanimous vote.

Discussion of Policy KEC “Public Concerns and Complaints About Instructional Resources” & AR-KEC. The SC Department of Education has a model policy that combines our current KEC & IJL “Library/Media Center Materials Selection and Adoption” policies. It was recommended by Huddle and also Dr. Ross that we adopt this combined policy with a few additions and changes. We do like that when a book is under review, it will be immediately removed from circulation as seen in the model policy. To date, we still have had no submittals of the form that is in our current policy and that is very similar to the SCDOE’s model policy. We should make it simpler to encourage our parents to fill this out instead of just sending emails and posting on social media about complaints. We need a formal review process to protect against litigation. We will add to the model policy that our selection aids for choosing books will be those that are approved by the state. The community is concerned that books of an obscene or explicit nature are even getting into our school libraries. While this is concerning, it is important we, as a local school district, can have a say on what is obscene or explicit and remove these books in a timely fashion. Our policy is designed to give us local control if the community uses the process. Since the board is adopting textbooks, would it not be logical that we would approve the books that are in our school libraries? Trustee Huddle commented that she has recently looked for a list of books that are currently in our libraries. This list is extremely hard to find, and it does not list new books that will be arriving soon so that parents can see what is coming in. Our policy should require a list of all new books to be made for each school that is easily accessible for parents. Another change to the model policy is that the committee formed after a submission of reconsideration should include at least a majority of parents and community members and not district employees. We should also add appeals process into this policy as requested by the SCDOE.

Discussion of Policy JICDA “Code of Conduct” began with Ms. Huddle asking that we review the appeals process and make it clear in the policies. In the last 3+ years, we have never had an expulsion brought before the board, even though the policy states that all expulsions come before the board. There are pre-expulsion hearings that prevent expulsions from coming to the board. We need clarification of the process and it needs to be spelled out better in our policies. There is an AR-JKER policy for Expulsion. It has come to our attention that most parents and students do not know about the appeals process or the

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judicial role of the board in these situations. The word “may” in JICDA-R is very ambiguous under Extenuating or Mitigating Circumstances when referring to the board’s role.

Policy JICFAA “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying” should include our “StopIT” program and app usage. Also, currently there are no assigned advocates to victims in our bullying cases. Dr. Ross said they are working to have help assigned to the offending party and also to the victim separately, whereas the current policy does not specify for both. We should have a section in our policy that addresses a victim’s/target’s rights and a victim advocate. Dr. Ross will get with Dr. Harris and they will address some of these concerns and present to the full board some updates to their procedures.

Policy BEDH “Public Participation at Meetings” was presented with suggested edits from the last policy committee. It was decided that the entire section about Public Participation Questions would be removed since Public Participation is not the place to ask questions. Questions and FOIA requests must come to the school district via e-mail or phone call. We have decided to delete this section. Also, we need to prohibit ceding or yielding one participant’s time to another participant.

Policy BDG & BDG-R “Board Attorney/Legal Services” was brought to this committee with the suggested changes after the attorney review of the policy. We should always use “attorneys” and not use “law firms” throughout the policies because law firms have many eligible and ineligible attorneys. We should protect our interests by vetting each attorney using the Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings system, asking for years of experience in each area of law, finalizing a fee agreement defining the scope of work, and billing accountability. We will refer to Board Policy BCA “Board Member Code of Ethics,” in this policy. The 2nd reading will be at Monday’s full board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The next scheduled Policy Committee Meeting will be TBD.