

South Orange Maplewood School District
Policy Committee of the Board 2021
January 12, 2022 - 6:30 pm
Meeting Notes

Superintendent: Dr. Ronald Taylor

Committee Chair: Susan Bergin

Members: Elissa Malespina, Qawi Telesford, Arun Vadlamani, Student Representative Noah Morros

Administrative Liaison: Susie Budine, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services

Ms. Bergin and Dr. Taylor began the meeting by providing an overview and structure of the Policy committee to the new committee members. Ownership of policies and review of the policies by committee was discussed.¹

- Review of policies - mandatory versus non-mandatory;
- Use of Strauss Esmay for the development for the majority of our policies as well as the development of SOMSD specific policies;
- Need to have a balance when reviewing policies;
- The more the District revises the policies, the harder it is to reevaluate for future boards.
- Policies have genesis linked to changes in the law - linked to regulation and changed to law making body;
- Another important piece is to keep an eye on managing committees and to keep reminding SLT members about the policies on their agendas.
- The District was able to partner with Strauss Esmay as a repository for policy updates.
 - Question about the policy life cycle?
- There are a few ways a policy is selected for review.
 1. Strauss Esmay generates a list of policies needing updating;
 2. Board member could request that a policy be reviewed; or
 3. The Superintendent or the Administration could request that a policy be reviewed.
- NJSBA has policies that we can draw from; also can look to other districts.
- District can also develop policies from scratch that do not come from Strauss Esmay.
- Policy Committee needs to develop a mission statement; it will include goals.
 - One goal needs to be staying on top of the policy alerts that come from Strauss Esmay;
 - Another goal needs to be improving policy process between the committees;
- Goal for future policy meetings is to put the policies in the drive and to put the comments in the drive;
- Administration discussed the difference between changes from Strauss Esmay versus the Board. Strauss Esmay changes will be simple “tracked changes.” Additional changes made by the administration or the board will be highlighted in yellow as well as

¹ A fully detailed overview of the policy structure can be found on page 6 of this document, “Policy Review Process”.

tracked changes. All such changes are maintained electronically. Future administrations will be able to see those documents posted publicly.

Consideration of Policies on the Agenda for January 2022

1. Board Policy Reviews and SLT (and Administration) Input

a. Policies for Second Reading (review any comments received)

2415.04 Title I – District-Wide Parental Involvement

- Discussion of whether it can be any parents or does it have to be Title I parents;

2415.20 Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints

- Policy will go forth for second reading in January.

3221 Evaluation of Teachers

- Observations schedule governed by the law - standardized to help districts stay on track;
- Dates cannot be changed;

3222 Evaluation of Teaching Staff Members, Excluding Teachers and Administrators

- See above discussion;

3223 Evaluation of Administrators, Excluding Principals, Vice Principals & Assistant Principals

3224 Evaluation of Principals, Vice Principals & Assistant Principals

3142 Nonrenewal of Non-tenured Teaching Staff Member

4146 Nonrenewal of Nontenured Support Staff Member

5116 Education of Homeless Students

- Language should be added about homeless students receiving additional support or intervention services.
- Question of whether homeless students are counted in District's state reporting and whether the numbers are public.
- In the District's student database the numbers may not reflect a child's homelessness status;
- Board members don't have access to PowerSchool on the administrative side but they can request de-identified reports for data.

Three Perkins Audit policies:

6115.01 Federal Awards/Funds Internal Controls – Allowability Of Costs

6115.02 Federal Awards/Funds Internal Controls – Mandatory Disclosures

6115.03 Federal Awards/Funds Internal Controls – Conflict Of Interest

- Policies will move forward for second reading in January.

b. Policies in Process of Being Prepared for First Reading

2421 Career & Vocational Education

- Policy on the agenda for review by C&I;

2422 Health & Physical Education

2480 Alternative Education Programs

- Policy is being reviewed by C&I.
- Montrose would have been considered an alternative placement program;
- Can run a report on alternative placements – need a clear definition of what an alternative placement is.
- Board approved the Cougar Academy for smaller class sizes that were targeted for specific students.
- Students are performing better.
- Policy will be held for further discussion.

5519 Dating Violence at School

7436 Drug Free Workplace (M)

- Send to Personnel

8330 Student Records

- Policy originally sent to FFT as the holder of records;
- Portions of the policy that should be reviewed by C&I.
- Policy will be sent to C&I for review.

9130 Public Complaints and grievances policy

- Discussion regarding book challenges and the fact the policy has not been updated in 20 years.
- Recommendation by the ALA that the policy be updated;
- Outside groups can come in and start making challenges;
- Districts should start making changes and making them as specific as possible; Ms. Malespina spoke with Strauss Esmay to see if there were any updates; Based on best practices and experts, and other policies, Ms. Malespina was able to construct the policy presented;
- Studies shown, as much as we can show in the public about what we put out in the public, people tend not to challenge as much or they will use that to not take that off of the shelf;
- Discussions about using a google form for book challenges or another method;
- Noted during discussion that when a book is being challenged, a form should be filled out to indicate why a book is being challenged.
- The form should ask for specifics;
- It is also good to have a committee that can ask questions.
- This needs to be done – the District should not wait very long;
- Do not think the challenges will come from within the community - may come from outside of the community; our district may be targeted;
- Do not want us to be in a situation where we are reactive versus proactive;
- It would be one of the stronger policies out there and would be a model policy to be used in other districts.
- Discussion that the Board should not be controlling the procedures;
- The Board can take the lead in the policy but the procedure or regulations should come from the administration;
- Ms. Malespina will separate the drafted recommended policy into a separate policy and regulation which will be sent to the C & I committee for vetting & review;

c. Strauss Esmay Policy Alert Review

The following alerts were sent out to committees to review last fall. C&I and Personnel have flagged policies to review; FFT did not respond yet.

[Alert 223](#) (in Drive)

[Alert 224](#) (In Drive)

[Alert 225](#) (In Drive)

The committee breakdown is:

000	Bylaws - EXEC
1000	Administration: EXEC
2000	Program: C&I
3000	Teaching Staff Members: PERSONNEL
4000	Support Staff: PERSONNEL
5000	Students: C&I
6000	Finances: FFT
7000	Property: FFT
8000	Operations: FFT
9000	Community: POLICY

2. New Business

- a. Create document regarding policy review process to share with committees
 - i. See draft below the agenda
- b. Committee Mission Statement

Will share previous mission statements for committees with all committee members/chairs.

3. Old Business

- a. Updating Policy Spreadsheet
 - i. Discussion that administration is working on a spreadsheet to track the Strauss Esmay and existing Board policies to ensure compliance;
 - ii. Spreadsheet should include a review cycle as well as a regulation column completion check list.
 - iii. Track changes the board makes from Strauss Esmay versions of policies

4. Items Related to BPW Settlement/Elementary Integration per David Ruben email "The BPW settlement agreement requires the district "to update its written integration plan ("the Integration Plan") setting forth how integration is to be accomplished and which includes specific goals and timetables for completion."

- save for end of meeting -Board Member Malespina recused

None

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

DRAFT - Policy Review Process

1. Policy management
 - a. Mandatory/mandated policies need to be reviewed yearly (?)
 - i. Policies need to be changed whenever the statute is updated or there is a governor's executive order issued to do so. Strauss Esmay will issue updated statutes via Policy Alerts as well any Executive Orders that come from the Governor.
 - ii. Other policies have specific times that it states that it needs to be updated.
 - b. All other policies should be reviewed every 5 years
 - c. Policy committee works with other committee chairs to ensure the board policies are up to date and reviewed regularly
2. Selection of policies for review
 - a. The district contracts with Strauss-Esmay for policy and regulation consulting services. Strauss Esmay develops policy manuals based on state and federal laws and informs districts when policies need to be updated through periodic alerts.
 - b. Policy chair will forward Strauss Esmay alerts to committee chairs to review for their policy series with their SLT liaison:

000	Bylaws - EXEC
1000	Administration: EXEC
2000	Program: C&I
3000	Teaching Staff Members: PERSONNEL
4000	Support Staff: PERSONNEL
5000	Students: C&I
6000	Finances: FFT
7000	Property: FFT
8000	Operations: FFT
9000	Community: POLICY
 - c. Committee chairs will select policies in need of review
 - d. Policy committee may also identify policies in need of review
 - i. Currently, there is a backlog of out of date policies
3. Finance, Personnel, C&I will review marked copies of policies at committee meetings
 - a. Committee chairs or committee SLT liaison will forward committee feedback to policy chair and policy committee SLT liaison
 - b. Policy committee SLT will follow up to make sure feedback is sent to Policy committee
4. Policy will review the proposed policies and make any additional changes (such as unclear language, he/she or parent/guardian or pupil/student edits)

- a. If the policy requires substantial edits, the Policy committee may send it back to the requesting committee for re-work
 - b. If the policy has legal/regulator questions, the Policy committee may send it to district counsel for review
 - c. The policy committee may research policies of other districts or the NJSBA version of the policy.
 - d. When the policy committee is satisfied the policy is up to date and reflects the District goals, the Policy committee will put it on the agenda for 1st read
- 5. After 1st read
 - a. BOE members will email the Policy Chair with their comments/questions/edits
 - b. At the next Policy committee, all feedback received will be reviewed
 - c. If a policy requires further edits/legal review that cannot be completed in time for the monthly BOE meeting, the policy can be pulled to be presented at a later date.
 - i. Pulled policies start the cycle over: Policy committee review, submit for 1st read and then 2nd read
 - d. If a policy does not need further edits/review, then the policy can be added to the BOE agenda for 2nd read/Board approval
- 6. After passage
 - a. District includes passed policies in BOE meeting recap to highlight for admin implementing policies
 - b. Admin places policy on website
 - c. Update master policy review chart
 - d. Admin determines any changes to regulations
 - i. Is admin tracking that regulations are updated to reflect policy changes