

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Committee Meeting
July 18, 2013

Attending: Commissioner Cruz (Chair) and Commissioners Powell and Campos (left at 6:03PM for medical reasons). Parent Representative: Barbara Van Kerkhove absent. District staff: Ed Lopez-Soto, Chief Counsel; Bethany Centrone, Chief of Human Capital Initiatives. Board staff: Debra Flanagan.

Commissioner Cruz convened the meeting at 5:36PM.

I. Review and Approve Minutes of June 13, 2013 Policy Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2013 Policy Committee meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. **Adopted 3-0.**

II. Review and Discuss Proposed Revision of Values Education Policy (4311.2)

Ed Lopez-Soto reported that he will meet with Bill Benet next week to consider further revisions to the Values Education policy, and to finalize the presentation to be given to staff and stakeholders. He stated that he plans to present additional policy revisions to the Committee in the September meeting.

Commissioner Cruz expressed concern about the complexity of the current presentation, particularly in using rather theoretical and academic terms. He stated that the presentation should be simplified so that the values and expectations are readily apparent to parents and the school community.

Commissioner Campos also shared this concern, emphasizing the importance of clarity in terms of expectations for staff and students.

Commissioner Powell pointed out that the values contained in the policy are of equal importance, but can be in conflict at times (e.g. freedom and respect for authority, human rights and collective obligations). She asserted that the polarities model addresses these conflicting priorities and offers further opportunities for discussion and learning.

III. Review and Discuss Proposed Staff Evaluation Policy (9330)

Bethany Centrone discussed the revisions to the Evaluation of Teachers policy (0330), primarily to ensure that the policy applies to all District staff.

Commissioner Powell questioned the rationale for establishing an August 1st deadline for completing performance evaluations for staff exempt from a collective bargaining agreement. Ms. Centrone replied that the law requires teachers to be evaluated by June 30th, and additional time would be needed to complete performance evaluations for non-teaching and exempt staff.

Motion by Commissioner Campos to approve proposed revision of Evaluation of Teaching Staff policy (formerly 0330). Seconded by Commissioner Powell. **Adopted 3-0.**

IV. Review of Policies for Updating the Policy Manual (2265 through 4320)

A. School-Based Planning Teams Policy (2265)

Debra Flanagan recalled that the Policy Committee requested information regarding the legal requirements for school-based planning teams in last month's meeting. She reported that federal and NYS law require school districts to share planning and decision-making with parents, but the districts can determine the way in which this will be accomplished (i.e. through teams or other methods).

Commissioner Powell noted that school-based planning teams were heavily regulated under the Pataki administration, and requested information regarding changes in these regulations since that time.

Action Item: Ed Lopez-Soto will look into the history of NYS regulations regarding school-based planning teams, and report his findings to the Policy Committee.

Commissioner Cruz expressed concern about principals serving as the chair of the school-based planning team and thereby influencing decision-making and the work of the team. He suggested a more in-depth examination of the factors affecting the efficacy of these teams by comparing their roles and functions in different schools.

B. Equivalence in Instructional Staffing and Materials Policy (4010)

Ms. Flanagan reported that federal law requires school districts to have a policy in place for providing equivalence among schools in terms of instructional staffing and materials. She stated that this is a condition for receipt of Title I funding.

Mr. Lopez-Soto concurred, noting that similar policies in other districts do not contain a requirement for the Superintendent to report to the Board of Education on equivalence among schools.

Commissioner Powell noted that this information is required to be reported to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and the Superintendent could simply provide a copy of this report to the Board for their information. She asked about the timeframe for submitting this report to NYSED.

Action Item: Mr. Lopez-Soto will identify the specific report containing information about equivalence among RCSD schools, and the timeframe for providing this report to NYSED.

C. Art Education Policy (4320)

Mr. Lopez-Soto reported that the Arts Education policy was reviewed by the Deputy Superintendent for Administration (Anita Murphy), who did not advise making any revisions because the policy reflects current NYS standards.

Commissioner Powell contended that the provisions of this policy are purely aspirational and do not contain any specific requirements, standards, or guidelines for the District. She asserted that the policy must be developed further if the Board wishes to establish standards beyond the minimum mandated by the State. If the provisions merely reflect NYS standards, she contended that the policy is not useful and should be eliminated.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to rescind the Art Education policy (4320). **Adopted 2-0.**

D. Proposed Revision of Wellness Policy (5405)

Ms. Flanagan discussed the proposed revision to the Wellness policy to incorporate the provisions of a number of separate related policies: Health Education (4315), Family Life Education (4312.1), AIDS Instruction (4315.1), and Physical Education (4316). She stated that the policy proposal is based on current NYS regulations, and consolidating the provisions of separate individual policies will facilitate referencing and updating.

Ms. Flanagan stated that the proposed revisions have been reviewed by Gloria Sullivan, RCSD Compliance Coordinator, and Carlos Cotto, Director of Health and Physical Education. She reported that a major concern involves the ability to locate specific information quickly and easily, which is more difficult with a larger consolidated Wellness policy. Ms. Flanagan suggested providing hyperlinks to each of the specific sections in the Wellness policy on the District website to address this concern.

Commissioner Powell suggesting using hyperlinks with several other policies that are rather voluminous, such as the Safe Schools policy (8135). Ms. Flanagan suggested creating these hyperlinks also for the Code of Conduct (5300).

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the proposed revision of the Wellness policy. **Adopted 2-0, on condition of approval of Commissioner Campos via email.**

Action Item: Ms. Flanagan will include in the agenda for the September Policy Committee meeting review of the Safe Schools policy (8135) and the Code of Conduct (5300).

V. Other Business:

Commissioner Powell announced that Michael Alves will be in Rochester on July 25th, and invited Board members to meet with him prior to the Business meeting that evening. She noted that Michael Alves was a consultant who was instrumental in determining zone boundaries and formulating the District's plan for school choice.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to adjourn. **Adopted 2-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:23PM.