

**Board of Education
Policy Committee Meeting
May 17, 2011
5:30PM**

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Cruz (Chair); Commissioners Campos (arrived 6:04PM) and Powell (arrived 6:08PM). Parent Representative: Vicki Robertson. District Staff: Chuck Johnson and Dorothy Evans-Flaherty. Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Cruz decided to review and discuss the policy proposals on the agenda, and officially convene the meeting when the other Committee members arrive for a quorum.

I. Draft Fingerprinting Policy

Chuck Johnson noted that the Fingerprinting regulation was presented to the Policy Committee in the April meeting, and has been signed by the Interim Superintendent. He stated that the draft Fingerprinting policy formalizes current District practice of fingerprinting all prospective employees and contractors regardless of their length of employment, and exceeds the requirements of the law.

Mr. Johnson explained that employees will be given information upon hiring about fingerprinting and the sources to be checked for criminal history background. He stated that the criminal history check includes dispositions and not arrests, and a record would not necessarily preclude hiring an employee. Mr. Johnson described a number of factors considered in reviewing the criminal history of a prospective employee, such as the nature of the offense, severity, whether a child was involved, and how long ago the offense was committed. He stated that any arrest of a current employee is reported to the District for ongoing assurance of students' safety.

Parent Representative Victoria Robertson commented that there has been a great deal of discussion about obtaining criminal history checks on volunteers. Mr. Johnson replied that this presents some difficulty because of the large number of volunteers with the District and the brief time period that may be involved (e.g. sometimes only for one day). Director of the Safety and Security Office, Lori Baldwin, notified Committee members that the State will not accept fingerprints or perform a criminal background check for volunteers. Ms. Robertson suggested that this information be included in the policy.

Commissioner Cruz inquired about the rationale for specifically excluding bus drivers and bus attendants from the provisions of the proposed Fingerprinting policy. Mr. Johnson clarified that these employees are subject to a more rigorous background check under the law.

II. Draft Videoconferencing Policy

Mr. Johnson explained that the draft policy has been revised in response to a concern raised in the April Policy Committee meeting regarding potential misuse of videoconferencing. He stated that the current policy proposal emphasizes that a Board member's physical presence in meetings is of paramount importance and videoconferencing cannot serve as a substitute. Mr. Johnson noted that examples of extenuating circumstances have been incorporated into the proposed policy to provide guidelines regarding the use of videoconferencing.

III. Draft Internal Audit Reports Policy

Mr. Johnson stated that the draft policy was presented in the April Policy Committee meeting, and is still under consideration.

Commissioner Cruz directed the proposed policy be referred to the members of the Audit Committee to request their feedback.

Ms. Robertson asserted that she is still concerned that complete information (i.e. the full audit report) cannot be obtained except through a request under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) and this would allow some of the contents to be redacted. She stated that this seems to undermine the intent of the policy in providing transparency and accountability. Ms. Robertson emphasized the importance of disclosure unless there is a compelling reason not to provide the information to the public.

IV. Proposed Revision of Parent & Family Engagement Policy

Dorothy Evans-Flaherty presented a handout with data as to the length of time for Customer Service staff to resolve all parent concerns received between February 1 and April 30, 2011. She explained that the cases requiring the greatest amount of time tend to involve scheduling meetings with principals or staff in other departments and/or addressing a placement issue. In some cases, she stated that there was a conflict between a parent and teacher/staff which was beyond the jurisdiction of the staff in the Office of Parent Engagement (e.g. staff discipline, tracking payment/purchase of books).

Ms. Evans-Flaherty reported that the regulation has been changed so that parents can appeal to the Chief of the Youth & Family Services Division or to the Superintendent if a response has not been received within 15 days. Commissioner Cruz noted that the data indicate that the majority of cases (81%) were resolved within two weeks.

Ms. Evans-Flaherty recommended forming a district-wide task force to include teachers and principals to obtain their support for the revised policy. Commissioner Cruz agreed about the importance of obtaining input from all constituents affected by the proposed policy revision and regulation, but also emphasized the importance of having these guidelines in place for the upcoming school year in September.

V. Proposed Revision of Board By-Laws

Mr. Johnson reviewed the changes proposed to the Board By-Laws:

- Removing the fixed time for the Annual Organizational meeting (i.e. noon)
- Removing the reference to 8:30PM for adjournment of the monthly Business meeting
- Allowing Board members to videoconference into meetings of the Board and Committee meetings of the whole
- Establishing a five-minute time limit each time a Board member is recognized in a meeting

Commissioner Cruz asked whether the By-Laws would be revised to allow the Board President to terminate debate on a topic. Mr. Johnson replied that this provision is not contained in the proposed revision of the Board By-Laws, but debate can be terminated through use of Robert's Rules (i.e. through a motion approved to "Call to Question"). Commissioner Cruz explained that the limit on speaking time is based on a rule of the County legislature, but the County also terminates debate after each legislator has had an opportunity to speak on the topic (i.e. through automatically "Calling to Question"). He stated that the intent is to prevent lengthy debates that interfere with transacting business.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Board By-Laws currently establish a limit of 60 minutes for all speakers in a Board meeting, and allow individuals to speak at the next Board meeting if the time limit has been reached. He asked whether Committee members might want to consider revising this provision.

Mr. Johnson also asked about the provision allowing the Student Representative to attend meetings discussing hiring the Superintendent.

Motion by Commissioner Campos to approve proposed revision of Board By-Laws. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of parent representative.**

Commissioner Cruz called a recess of the meeting at 6:06PM to allow Commissioner Campos time to review the other proposed policies on the agenda. Meeting called to order at 6:08PM.

Motion by Commissioner Campos to approve proposed Videoconferencing policy. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of parent representative.**

Motion by Commissioner Campos to approve proposed Internal Audit Reports policy. Parent Representative Ms. Robertson stated that she is not in favor of the proposed policy because it does not require full disclosure of information. She advocated adding a statement that information will be disclosed except when there is a compelling reason to prevent releasing it to the public. **Adopted 2-0, with suggested amendment and concurrence of parent representative.**

Motion by Commissioner Campos to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2011 Policy Committee meeting. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of parent representative.**

Motion by Commissioner Campos to adjourn. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of parent representative.**

Next Policy Committee Meeting: To be determined (currently scheduled for June 14th, which conflicts with date of the City's public hearing on the RCSD budget)