

**Board of Education
Policy Committee Meeting
January 13, 2011
5:30PM**

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Cruz (Chair); Commissioners Campos and Powell (arrived 6:11PM). Parent Representative: Vicki Robertson. District Staff: Chuck Johnson and Gladys Pedraza Burgos. Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Cruz convened the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2010 Policy Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Campos to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2010 Policy Committee Meeting. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of parent representative.**

II. Review Proposed Revision to Wellness policy (5405) and regulation

Commissioner Campos reported that she had just come from a meeting of the District-wide Wellness Task Force in which the proposed revisions to the Wellness policy were discussed. She stated that the Task Force recommended proceeding with the proposed policy revisions while the regulation and plans for implementation are being finalized. Commissioner Campos noted that the proposed policy anticipates requirements in a recent reauthorization bill before Congress to remove unhealthy foods from vending machines in schools.

Chuck Johnson elaborated that the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires school districts to establish standards for healthy food and physical activity, which are to apply to all food sold at school.

Mr. Johnson stated that he spoke with Superintendent Brizard about the suggestion to have these standards apply to staff as well as students. He explained the Superintendent's concern regarding these significant changes and the potential resistance this would engender, also pointing out that a wider range of foods and choices should be available to adults than to students. For this reason, the regulation states that administration and operational buildings and departments of the District are "strongly encouraged" to comply with the standards to set a positive example for students.

Another proposed revision reported by Mr. Johnson clarifies that the policy may be implemented on a pilot basis to allow the Superintendent to determine the timing and manner in which it will be initiated. He noted that the District-wide Wellness Task Force is currently seeking a secondary school to participate in the pilot program, so flexibility is needed in terms of implementation.

Commissioner Campos stated that the principal of School No. 2 reported that staff were amenable to having the nutritional standards apply to them because they still have the choice

over the food that they bring to school. Commissioner Cruz emphasized the importance of adults modeling behavior for children to promote positive, meaningful change. He also asserted that the schools participating in the pilot program should determine the timing of implementation, within a reasonable timeframe (i.e. fall of 2011). Parent Representative Vicki Robertson pointed out that it is much easier for students to comply with rules and standards if adults are also following them, which is particularly important for high school students.

Commissioner Campos reported that parents presented a petition at the Parent Council meeting on January 10th to make recess mandatory throughout the District. Legally, the District is not required to provide recess because NYS law and regulations leave this to the discretion of each school district. Ms. Robertson contended that if recess is not mandatory in the District, there will be too many excuses not to provide it.

Motion by Commissioner Campos to approve proposed revision to Wellness policy (5405).
Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of parent representative.

III. Report on the Status of Reviewing and Updating the Policy Manual

Debra Flanagan reported that five legal mandates remain to be addressed in policy, primarily regarding access, privacy and management of information in the District. She noted that policy development to comply with some of the mandates will require collaboration of several different departments, such as Human Capital Initiatives and Information Management and Technology. Ms. Flanagan noted that another five mandates pertain to Special Education, and expressed concern about addressing these with the departure of Kirsten Barclay.

Mr. Johnson replied that Kirsten Barclay will continue to work for the District as a contractor, and she has agreed to develop policies to comply with the Special Education mandates. He also reported that a number of policies are in process, including one to address students' use of the Internet.

Commissioner Cruz requested that the policies addressing Special Education requirements be presented to the Policy Committee for consideration no later than April 2011.

Action Item: Mr. Johnson will prepare draft policies or amendments to comply with mandates regarding access, privacy and management of District information to present to the Policy Committee in February. Mr. Johnson will prepare policies to address Special Education mandates to present to the Policy Committee by April.

IV. New Business

A. Parent Forum

Commissioner Cruz announced that the Policy Committee will be convening a Parent Forum on Thursday, February 3rd, from 6:00-7:30PM to gather input from parents regarding the Parent Involvement policy (1900).

Ms. Flanagan described efforts underway to notify various parent groups of this event, and to publicize in the media (i.e. via robocall and press release).

Commissioner Cruz stated that an agenda would have to be created to structure the Forum.

Action Item: Ms. Flanagan will create a draft agenda for the Parent Forum for Commissioner Cruz's review.

B. Concerns regarding the Placement Process at the Secondary Level

Ms. Robertson conveyed parents' concerns regarding changes in the placement process this year for secondary schools. She explained that parents had been able to apply for restricted, city-wide schools (i.e. School of the Arts, Wilson) and also to indicate their preference of general high schools. Because of this parallel process between restricted city-wide schools and general high schools, parents and students had a wider range of choices available. A student could apply to the School of the Arts and the Wilson IB program, as well as select their top three choices of general high schools. Ms. Robertson noted that this year the process has been consolidated so that parents and students have to select their preferences between both the city-wide and general high schools. So now a student will have to make their top three choices among School of the Arts, Wilson IB, and the general high schools.

Gladys Pedraza Burgos explained that changes were made in the placement process this year in response to parents' concerns and confusion over separate and multiple processes used in the past. She stated that a number of schools were operating their own independent admissions process, which led to confusion, inconsistencies, and duplication of effort. Ms. Pedraza Burgos asserted that this was the reason for establishing a centralized process.

Commissioner Powell pointed out that the problem arises when the number of students qualified for a particular school is greater than the number of available seats. She contended that this situation has arisen from not including secondary schools in the Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy.

Motion by Commissioner Campos to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. **Adopted 3-0, with concurrence of parent representative.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:20PM.

Next Meeting: February 10, 2011 at 5:30PM